

(Matthew) ch.25:14-26:32

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the importance of faithful stewardship of God's gifts and the accountability we have towards Him and others in our lives.

Duration: 59:17

Scripture: Matthew 11:6, Matthew 25:14, Matthew 25:45, Matthew 26:14-15, Matthew 26:29, James 2:14-16

Topics: "Stewardship", "Faithfulness"

Description

In this sermon on Matthew 25:14-30, the preacher focuses on the parable of the talents and its implications for the second coming of Christ. The parable teaches responsibility and accountability to God for the gifts and talents He has given us. The emphasis is not on the quantity of what we produce, but on the quality and faithfulness with what we have. The sermon highlights three aspects of our life: our inner relationship with God, our accountability for all the gifts we have received, and our treatment of fellow believers in need. The ultimate goal is to hear the commendation from the Lord, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

Transcript

Let's turn now to Matthew's Gospel and chapter 25 and verse 14. For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, Jesus said, another parable in relation to the second coming of Christ and how we can be ready for it. A man about to go on a journey who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them.

To the one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, each according to his own ability. And he went on his journey. Now each of these talents was a massive amount of money in terms of silver content and much more in terms of buying power.

And immediately, verse 16, the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them and gained five more talents. In the same manner, the one who had received the two talents gained two more. But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

And after a long time, the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.

His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things. I'll put you in charge of many things.

Enter into the joy of your master. Now here we see that the Lord taught responsibility to his disciples according to the measure in which God had given them talents to use. We could apply that to all of God's gifts to us.

We have a responsibility, finally, to answer to God, to account for everything that we have received. And here the important thing is not how much we produce. In the world, the emphasis is on quantity.

But with the Lord, the emphasis is on quality. It's not how much we produce. It is a question of faithfulness with what we have.

And that is the point of this parable. Because the one who had five talents produced five more. His gain was one hundred percent.

The one who received only two talents produced two more. His gain was also one hundred percent. And when they stood before the Lord, and the man with five talents gave his extra five, and the one with two talents showed the extra two he had gained, the master gave both of them exactly the same commendation.

In verse 21 and verse 23. Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things.

I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master. Word for word, identically the same.

Proving that in the final day, our rewards will not depend on how much we have produced, but it will depend on how faithful we have been with what God gave us. If God gave you only two talents, and say he gave another brother fifty, in the final day, that brother will have to produce fifty more to get the same reward as you, who produced two more. It's a question of percentage, not a question of total.

It's a question of quality, not a question of quantity. It's a question of faithfulness, not a question of the extent of our influence. With what God gave you, what did you produce? We can apply this to many areas.

For example, with the time God gave you. All of us have spare time. Some have more spare time than others.

For example, those who are married and with many children and many responsibilities and late working hours in the office don't have much spare time. We can say that they are like brothers who got two talents as far as time is concerned. There are many other single brothers and sisters who have plenty of spare time.

They are like those who have five or ten talents. And in the final day, when the Lord examines each one, He's going to examine each one according to how much time they had. How did they use their spare time? We have energy, health.

Not all have the same. Some have a greater measure of health and energy than others, and God is going to evaluate us on the basis of how we used what He gave us. Money is another area where there are a lot of differences.

Some have more money, others have less. They are not going to be evaluated on the same basis. It's not a question of whether you gave one hundred rupees to the Lord's work or one rupee.

It's not a question of quantity. Jesus Himself said that a widow who put in two mites had actually put more into the box than all the wealthy Pharisees who had put in much more. It is not a question of quantity.

It was a question of percentage. The widow gave one hundred percent, even though it was only two mites. So we see that in the parables of Jesus and the teaching of the New Testament, it is quality that God looks for.

1 Corinthians chapter 3, verses 12 to 15, also makes it clear that the fire will test the quality of each man's work, whether it's gold, silver, and precious stones, or wood, hay, and straw. And so also here, we have a responsibility with what God has given us, whether it's time or health or money. It could be influence.

Maybe God has given you influence over a number of people. Have you used that influence for God? Others have less influence. They are not expected to produce so much as you.

There are many material gifts and abilities God has given to us. Have you used them for the Lord? Maybe it's children. God's given you five children.

He's given another one, only one or two. You have to raise up five children for the Lord. He has to raise up only two for the Lord.

The question is, did you raise your children for the Lord, or did you raise them for the world? What did you use your talent for? Here we read of a man who had one talent. What did he do with it? He buried it in the ground. That is like using your talent for the things of earth.

To bury it in the ground, to bury it in the earth, is to use our talent for the things of earth. And that is as good as not using it for God at all. And so there are no returns that come from it.

For God, the returns are nil. And there are many people who are using their time, their money, their energy, burying it in the ground in the sense that they are using it for the things of earth, for the things of time, which will pass away so quickly. And in effect, no returns are coming for the Lord from that gift which God gave for them to use.

We know the story of the prodigal son. We can think that the prodigal son is just a picture of a person who is an outright sinner. But think of yourself in that picture.

What did the son do? He received gifts from the Father and he used it all for himself. To receive gifts from God and to use it all for myself is to be a prodigal son, even if you are not a backslider or an outright sinner. To use our time, our energy, our money, our health for God.

That is to be a wise and faithful steward. To raise our children, every one of them, for God and not for the world. How many believers are there who do that? Most believers want their children to live and become great in the world.

To raise our children for God does not mean we train them all to be full-time Christian workers. We can raise them up to be in secular occupations, but they must live for God in their secular occupations. This is the point.

So, everything that God gives is to be used for Him. It could also apply to spiritual talents and gifts. There are spiritual gifts God gives us.

He has given more to some, less to others. A man like Paul was an apostle and a prophet and a shepherd and a teacher and an evangelist, all rolled in one. There are others who may have only one gift.

But however many we have, the important thing is, have we buried it in the ground? Have we used it for our own honor, to make money for ourselves? Or have we used it for God? If we have used it for God, we have invested it wisely. If we used it for ourselves, it has been buried in the earth. This is the way to find out whether we fall into the category of those who invested their talents or the one who buried it in the ground.

Do I use it for myself or do I use it for God? The one who uses it for himself, material or spiritual gifts, is like the one who buried it in the ground. And when the Master came, the one who had received the one talent, came up and said, Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, verse 24, gathering where you scattered no seed. He had a wrong understanding of his Master.

His relationship with his Master was a legalistic relationship, like people knew God under the law. It was not one of grace. He thought his Master was a hard, exacting man who demanded even to reap where he did not sow.

And the result of that type of relationship with God is that a man becomes afraid. There is fear in his life. I was afraid, he says in verse 25.

I went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours. He was legalistic.

Here is exactly what you gave me. Here you have it back. But his Master answered and said to him, Such a person is a wicked person.

Do you realize that when you use God's gifts for yourself and not for the glory of God, you are a wicked person? You knew that I reap where I did not sow, I gather where I scattered no seed. He is using his own words. Of course, the Master was not like that, but he was quoting his own words to him and saying, then you ought to have put my money at least in the bank so that on my arrival I would have received at least the interest.

Therefore, take away the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten talents. For to everyone who has shall more be given and he shall have an abundance. From the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.

What does this mean? It looks unrighteous, doesn't it? To give to the one who already has. But the meaning is, everyone who has obedience to him more will be given and he will have an abundance. But the one who does not have obedience, even what he does have will be taken away from him.

The one who uses what God gives him, God will give him more. When you are faithful in your little circle, God will expand your circle. But if we are unfaithful there and live for ourselves, even in the little circle we have, complaining that the circle is so little, then it says, cast out the worthless table into the outer darkness.

In that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then we are exactly like the unbelievers. Let's turn today to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 25 and verse 31.

But when the Son of Man comes in His glory and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne and all the nations will be gathered before Him. And He will separate them from one another as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. We studied in our last studies about the second coming of Christ in Matthew 24 and 25.

And we saw that Matthew 24 deals with the prophetic details of His coming. Matthew 25 deals with the spiritual preparation for His coming. And the first parable that Matthew refers to here in verse chapter 25 that Jesus spoke, is a parable that speaks about our life, our inner life, our private life before God, having content that the life of Jesus has come in.

And that we have that inner life within us corresponding to the oil in the flask and not just an externally good life. The second parable that Jesus spoke here, Matthew 25, verses 14 to 30, refers to our responsibility with the gifts that God gives us, material gifts, spiritual gifts, physical gifts, everything. And our answerability and accountability to God in relation to everything that God has given us.

In this section, verses 31 to 46, is a picture of how the Lord would judge the nations. And here the emphasis is on our accountability to God in relation to how we conducted ourselves in relation to other people who were in need around us, particularly our fellow believers. Our responsibility towards our fellow believers.

So we can say that Matthew 25 deals with three different subjects. And there are two parables and one description of future judgment here. And these three sections deal with three different aspects of our life.

One is our inner life with God, the inner godliness that other people cannot see. The other is our accountability for all the gifts, spiritual, physical material that God has given us. And the third is our treatment of other fellow believers around us who are in need.

We are accountable to God in all these three areas. Our inner life, the gifts God gives us, and our treatment of our fellow believers. And when the nations are gathered together before him, he's going to separate them as a shepherd separates a sheep from the goats.

And he'll put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left, verse 33. And then the king will say to those on his right, and these are the true sheep, come you who are blessed of my father. Now here Jesus indicated that until that day there'll be a mixture.

The sheep and the goats are going to be mixed, and sometimes it's going to be very difficult to discern who's a sheep and who's a goat. But in that day there'll be no doubt. Once Jesus comes, he will make it very clear that these are the sheep and those are the goats.

And the sheep are called here, the blessed of his father. Come you who are blessed of my father, verse 34. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me something to drink, to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in.

Naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me.

And the righteous will answer him saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you a drink and when did we see you a stranger, invite you in or naked and clothe you? Anyone would have gladly fed Jesus himself if he saw Jesus to be hungry or given him water if he saw Jesus to be thirsty or clothed Jesus if he saw Jesus without proper clothes. As far as that is concerned, there is no question but that everyone would do it, even those who are not wholehearted disciples of Jesus. But, the question is whether we would do it for one of Jesus younger brothers in his name.

Remember what John says in 1 John chapter 4, the last verse, it says the one who says he loves God and does not love his brother 1 John 4 and verse 20 the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. We can say we love God but the test of whether we love God or not is whether we love the brother whom we can see, not the brother whom we don't see. It's very easy to love a brother who lives ten thousand miles away who just writes an occasional letter to you or whom you have only heard of.

The test is in 1 John 4.20 Can you love the brother whom you see before you, the one whom you see regularly? That is the test. When you see your brother hungry do you feed him? That is the point here. When the righteous ask the Lord saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry? When did we see you sick or in prison and come to you? And the king will answer and say to them I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of mine even the least of them you did it to me.

When you do something to a brother of Jesus even to the least brother of Jesus the one who is the weakest disciple of Jesus who is just trusted in him the Lord says you've done it unto me. Do you desire to serve the Lord then serve his people? Do you desire to do something for the Lord then do something for his people? Do you desire to bless the Lord then bless his people? That is the point here. My love for God is shown by my love for my fellow believers whom the Lord has put before me.

And the way we treat them is the means by which God determines whether we qualify to be sheep or goats in the final day. Because it goes on to say here in verse 41 then he will say to those on his left, the goats depart from me accursed ones into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels for I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink.

I was a stranger you didn't invite me in. Naked you didn't clothe me. Sick and in prison you didn't visit me.

Then they will answer saying Lord when did we see you hungry? Or thirsty? Or a stranger? Or naked? Or sick? Or in prison? And didn't take care of you? If Jesus had been physically present there in any of these states of need, hungry or thirsty or as a stranger in a foreign land or naked or sick they would have gladly taken care of him but they did not recognize Jesus in his disciples. And that's the danger that all of us are facing. The danger of not recognizing Jesus in his disciples.

Truly I say to you to the extent, verse 45 that you did not do it to one of the least of these you did not do it to me and these will go away to eternal punishment, the righteous into eternal life. This does not teach salvation by works. Salvation is by faith.

But like James makes it very clear in James chapter 2 if a man says he's got faith James 2.14 but he has no works, can that faith save him? This is the scripture. If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, James chapter 2 verse 15 and 16 and one of you says to him, go in peace, be warmed and be filled, yet you don't give them what is necessary for their body. What use is that? That type of faith has got no works.

So we can say that such a person doesn't have faith at all. This is the point of the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The man who sat at that rich man's gate was his brother, Jew.

They were both Jews, children of Abraham and it was his brother who was in need, whose need he did not meet and that's why he was sent to eternal punishment. This is not saying that we are saved depending on whether we gave money to the beggars or not. But when you see your brother in need, the emphasis is on those who have become the younger brothers of Jesus, Matthew 25 and verse 40.

These brothers of mine, he's not ashamed to call some on earth his brothers, those who are born again, born of the Spirit. Jesus was born of the Spirit. Those who are born of the Spirit today, born again, are his younger brothers.

Not everyone, but those who are born of the Spirit and the way we treat those who are born of the Spirit is the way we treat Jesus Christ Himself. If only the seriousness of this would hit us, that every time you see that that brother in front of you is a brother of Jesus also and the way you treat him, the way you speak to him is actually the way you're speaking to a younger brother of Jesus. He's not just an individual there.

And the Lord takes note of it. The Lord takes note of how you speak to him and how you treat him because in the final day, in the same measure in which you measured, it will be measured back to you. And so this is something very, very important.

These righteous are so different from those described in Matthew chapter 7, verse 22 and 23 who also stand before the Lord in the final day of judgment and they have a big list of the things that they did. These righteous are so different in the sense that they don't even remember what they did. When did we do that for you, Lord? They have no recollection of the good that they have done.

Blessed are those who have no recollection of the good they have done. But those in Matthew 7, 22 have a list of the things they have done. We did this, we did this, we did this, we did this.

We even healed the sick. But they lived in sin. But the righteous did not heal the sick.

They only visited the sick. And it's very interesting to see in Matthew 7, 23 that those who healed the sick are sent to hell and those who only visited the sick in Matthew 25 and verse 37 enter the kingdom. It is not a question of spiritual gift and how much you did with that.

It's a question of attitude of heart. What was your attitude of heart to those who were in need among your fellow believers? Maybe you couldn't do much but did you sympathize with them and help them as much as you could? This is the test of whether we love God or not. Let's turn today to Matthew's Gospel chapter 26 and verse 1. And it came about that when Jesus had finished all these words, he said to his disciples.

Now this is immediately after he had spoken about his second coming, the prophetic details of it in Matthew 24 how we could be prepared for it in Matthew 25. He said to his disciples you know that after two days the Passover is coming and the Son of Man is to be delivered up for crucifixion. Jesus knew that he was going to be crucified on the Passover day.

Having studied the scriptures, he knew that that Lamb that was slain on the Passover day that law that God instituted among the Israelites right from the time he brought them out of Egypt. That was a picture of Jesus himself who would be crucified as the Lamb of God for the sins of the whole world. So he knew that this particular year he sensed in his spirit that the time had come.

This Passover he would be crucified. He was in touch with the spirit and he knew that the time had come. Then the chief priests and the elders, verse 3 of the people were gathered together in the court of the high priest named Caiaphas and they plotted together to seize Jesus by stealth and kill him.

Everything works according to God's timetable. No one could plot to seize Jesus and kill him without God's permission. We read in Acts to the Apostles in chapter 2 in the day of Pentecost when Peter was preaching to the multitude, he said in Acts 2.23 This man Jesus was delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God and you nailed him to a cross.

That was not accidental it was not just that at some particular time the chief priest decided God knew it foreknowledge means God knew it well in advance and predetermined plan means he planned it. God knows everything and he plans everything. The wonderful thing is Jesus said in John 17.23 He prayed to the Father that the world may know that the Father loves us as much as he loved Jesus.

Do you know that? It's the only verse in Scripture that tells us how much God loves us. There are many verses that tell us about God's love but John 17.23 tells us how much God loves us as much as he loved Jesus. Did he have a plan for the life of Jesus? Then he's got a plan for your life too if you're one of his children.

Did he have foreknowledge as to what all would happen in Jesus' life? He has foreknowledge as to what all will happen in your life too. In fact he has foreknowledge concerning everything that will happen in anybody's life but when it concerns you as a child of God he's also got a plan and along with his foreknowledge concerning all the things that people may plan or scheme, the good and bad that people do to you, the circumstances that will come into your life health and sickness and money and poverty and everything. He knows everything and in all of that he has made a plan and if only we can believe in this plan we would be at perfect rest.

God has made a plan and if the longing of your life is only that you might fit into that plan and do his will every day of your life then the pre-determined plan of God will be fulfilled in your life. People may plot against you it will only fulfill God's plan. That's what we see here.

They plotted together they did not know that they were fulfilling God's plan. When Joseph's brothers plotted together to sell Joseph off to Egypt they did not know they were fulfilling God's plan. When Potiphar's wife plotted to send Joseph to prison, she did not know that that was part of God's plan that in the prison Joseph would meet Pharaoh's butler.

And so we see here that they plotted but they were saying not during the festival lest a riot occur among the people. But God had determined that it was to be during that Passover time. Now when Jesus was in Bethany verse 6, at the home of Simon the leper a woman came to him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume and she poured it upon his head as he reclined at table Now this happened more than once.

We read in Luke chapter 7 towards the end of that chapter that it happened once when a woman who was a sinner poured anointment at Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her tears but here we read of another occasion which is just two days before the Passover two days before the time when Jesus would be crucified that someone broke an alabaster vial and poured it upon Jesus' head and the disciples were indignant when they saw this and said what is the point of this waste when we compare this with John chapter 12 we read there that Mary and Martha and Lazarus had a feast in their house and Mary poured

out the spikenard ointment at the feet of Jesus and there it says that Judas Iscariot one of his disciples asked this question why was this ointment wasted why wasn't it given to the poor here

we read of the disciples asking that question in Matthew 26 verse 8 why the point of this waste this perfume might have been sold for a high price and given to the poor and Jesus aware of this said why do you bother the woman she has done a good deed to me for the poor you have with you always but you do not always have me exactly the same words as in John chapter 12 verse 8 for when she poured this perfume upon my body she did it to prepare me for my burial exactly the same words as in John 12 verse 7 and then Jesus said truly I say to you Matthew 26 13 wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world what this woman has done shall also be spoken of in memory of her and so we see this event recorded in the gospels what this woman did and the interesting thing is that she was the only

one who could perfume Jesus body for his burial because we read that immediately after he was taken down from the cross on that Passover evening that he had to be buried straight away because the Sabbath had begun and then after the Sabbath was over in the first day of the week when the disciples the women came with spices to perfume the body of Jesus they never got the opportunity because Jesus rose again by then so the only one who got an opportunity to perfume the body of Jesus was the one who did it beforehand and that's what Jesus said here she has come beforehand to prepare me for my burial to perfume my body if you want to do something for the Lord do it now if you postpone it you may never get the opportunity now is the time to do what you want to do for the Lord there is a lesson

here for us what did she do? she took a vial of costly perfume and poured it on Jesus' head that must have cost her quite a bit of money John chapter 12 says such a vial cost 300 pence one pence is one day's wages that means a whole year's wages it takes ten years to save a whole year's wages we could say that she took her savings and bought something to pour out of the Lord's feet and the disciples were indignant they say why waste this on the Lord? why not use it for social work to help the poor and here we see Jesus' answer to this question which is a very important question because a lot of people today also think that social work to help the poor is far better than pouring out something on the Lord now in our previous study we saw in Matthew 25 that we do something for the Lord by

doing it for His disciples now here is a balance for that in scripture there is always a balance one truth along with another here we see someone pouring out an alabaster vial full of perfume not for the poor but for the Lord Himself that which we give with sacrifice to the Lord is never a waste it is always superior to social work for the poor that's what Jesus said and so we see here that Jesus said that this deed that this woman had done was a good deed but the disciples were indignant and we read from John chapter 12 that it was Judas Iscariot particularly who spoke about this because he used to take the collection and he used the money for himself which was given for the poor and when Jesus rebuked him publicly and rebuked the disciples here publicly saying that the woman had done a

good thing Judas Iscariot was offended he was offended at public rebuke and we read these interesting words then Matthew 26.14 then when he was rebuked publicly for this question when he was humiliated as it were by Jesus being shown up as not so spiritual as he thought he was and as he had pretended to be he got offended and he went to the chief priest in his anger and said alright what are you willing to give me? verse 15 and I'll deliver him up to you and they weighed out to him 30 pieces of silver and from then on he began looking for a good opportunity to betray Jesus there is a lesson for us to learn here it's very easy to be offended Jesus said blessed is he Matthew 11 who is not offended in me if the Lord were to rebuke us either directly or through one of his servants how would

we take it? would we get offended? then we follow Judas Iscariot in contrast we see that blessed man Peter who also was rebuked in public when he said in Matthew 16 something he shouldn't have said he said it in love but it was foolish and Jesus said get behind me Satan but Peter's response was different we read in John 6 he is saying whom shall we go to Lord? you have the words of eternal life he knew that the words of rebuke were the words of eternal life Judas Iscariot was offended your reaction to correction and rebuke determines whether you are a follower of Peter or Judas Iscariot and your end will also be different depending on your reaction let's learn to humble ourselves when the Lord rebukes us let's turn today to Matthew 26 and verse 17 now on the first day of the feast of

unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus saying where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover and he said go into the city to a certain man and say to him the teacher says my time is at hand I am to keep the Passover at your house with my disciples and the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and they prepared the Passover now we read of the time when Jesus was going to be crucified and he had shared with his disciples about that and had told them that they were going to eat the Passover together and so they came to him and said where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover and the Lord directed them to a certain place and there they prepared it and it says here in verse 20 when the evening had come he was reclining at table with the twelve disciples

and here we read of the time which we call the last supper the last meal that he had with his disciples before he was crucified and we read there that as he was reclining at table with the twelve disciples they were eating he said truly I say to you that one of you will betray me and being deeply grieved verse 22 each of them began to say to him surely not I Lord and he answered and said he who dipped his hand with me in the bowl is the one who will betray me the son of man is to go just as it is written of him but woe to that man through whom the son of man is betrayed it would have been good for that man if he had not been born and Judas who was betraying him answered and said surely it's not I Rabbi he said to him you have said it yourself there are one or two very good things that we

see here one is that Jesus had never in all these three and a half years exposed Judas to the disciples Jesus knew right from the time that Judas went astray that he was going to betray him when Jesus had selected Judas Iscariot he was a sincere upright person just like everyone else among those apostles because we read in Luke chapter 6 and verse 12 to 16 that Jesus chose these twelve whom he named apostles and one of them was Judas Luke 6 verse 16 who became a traitor he wasn't a traitor to start with he became one he was a good man and there was tremendous possibility for him he could perhaps even have written some of the letters that Paul wrote for he had a mind like Paul's but he became a traitor and Jesus never revealed that until the right time he waited for it to manifest itself

for the time to become ripe and we see that Judas was such a clever person that none of the other disciples suspected that he was a traitor and that's why when Jesus said one of you is going to betray me none of the other eleven had a clue as to who it was going to be in fact we see something very wonderful here in verse 22 that each of them said Lord is it I? surely not I that's a very good attitude with which to come to the Lord's table for we know that here as we read in verse 26 onwards it was the first time that the Lord broke bread and passed the cup around is what we know today as the breaking of bread this is where he instituted it and it begins with each of the disciples asking concerning themselves Lord is it I? am I the one who is going to betray you? am I the one who is

unfaithful? we read in 1 Corinthians 11 that when a man comes to eat the bread and drink the cup he should examine himself not the others not is it he Lord but is it I? with all their weaknesses this is one very

wonderful quality that we see in the disciples a desire to examine themselves at this point anyway but Jesus exposed Judas Iscariot now what we can learn from the example of Jesus here is that we are not to be quick to expose others before the right time there can be Judas' in our midst and there is a carnal desire within us when we know something to speak about it to speak about someone behind his back backbiting is such a common habit unfortunately among Christians here Jesus gives us an example things have to be exposed and Judas had to be exposed too but there was a right time

for it and that's what Jesus knew and he waited for God's time and until that time came he never said anything but when that time came of course he exposed him he said yes this is the one who dips his hand with me in the bowl who is going to betray me and then Jesus said concerning Judas that it would have been good for that man if he had not been born there are many people in the world who live godless lives but the worst of the lot are those who feign to have a devotion to Christ and betray him those who break bread with him and then betray him and Judas Iscariot is not the only one there are many through the centuries who've come together and broken bread with others in a holy solemn way and gone out from there and betrayed the Lord this word would be applicable to all such people it

would have been good for that man if he had not been born I'm sure that when Judas Iscariot was a little baby his parents must have had great hopes for him they had the habit of taking the children to the temple to be dedicated to offer a sacrifice unto the Lord as we read in Luke chapter 2 they did even for Jesus little did they expect that one day this little child would grow up and Jesus the son of God would say concerning him it would have been good if he had not been born it's a serious thing to come to the Lord's table to break bread together and then to betray that trust that the Lord places in us it's far better that such a person was never a Christian was a godless person such a person's fate would be better than the one who claims to be devoted and plays the hypocrite verse 26

while they were eating Jesus took some bread and after a blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said take eat this is my body and he took a cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying drink from it all of you for this is my blood of the covenant which is to be shed on behalf of many for forgiveness of sins here we read of the institution of the Lord's table which we read in the episodes too we are to do together as a fellowship as a church and it is got a great depth of meaning in it far more than we can exhaust in a brief study but here we read something of fellowship in the new testament sitting at a table is often a picture of fellowship Jesus spoke about sitting at a table with his disciples in the millennial kingdom it speaks of fellowship and here sitting at the

table they were going to eat of that bread which was broken a picture of his body which was broken there it was not just a physical brokenness that Jesus was speaking of there was an inward brokenness inside that body all through the years that Jesus lived on earth what was broken inside that body his own will he said in John 6 verse 38 I came from heaven not to do my will but the will of him who sent me we know that one of the strongest things in our body perhaps the strongest thing is our will the strength of our will that is what God seeks to break for that will is what leads the body into sin Jesus was born with that body and with a will like that which in other words the bible calls the flesh and he never did that will he did the will of his father he denied that will which he had as

a human being in order that he might do the will of his father there was a brokenness which finally manifested itself of course in that physical brokenness on the cross and this is the symbolism of that broken bread and when the disciples partook of it even though they didn't understand the meaning of it right then this is the meaning that we want to fellowship with Jesus in this brokenness in this way of

brokenness along which he went and the cup speaks of that blood he himself said this is my blood of the covenant not the old covenant which was celebrated and sanctified through the blood of lambs and goats but here it was through the blood of Jesus the lamb of God the blood of the new covenant which is shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins in the old testament the sins were

merely covered but now they are removed completely their new covenant is their sins and iniquities I will remember no more there is no more remembrance of it we are not only forgiven we are freed we are justified we are declared righteous by God and when we drink of that cup we are speaking again of a fellowship with Jesus in that shed blood and so the fellowship with Jesus in this broken body and the cup speak of a sharing in his death a taking up the cross and following Jesus in the way that he went this is the meaning of the Lord's table to which he invites us let's turn today to Matthew 26 and verse 26 and while they were eating that is the disciples at the last supper Jesus took some bread and after a blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said take eat this is my body

we were considering at the close of our last study about the Lord's table which he had instituted for the first time on that Passover night before he was crucified and we saw that it symbolized a fellowship with Jesus in his death in death to that human will that rebelled against God in the garden of Eden and that has rebelled against God through all the centuries and millenniums since then Jesus brought that will down to death in his body and did the will of his father and now as we break bread together with him we are expressing a desire to fellowship with Jesus in the way in which he went the way of obedience to the father of pleasing the father in all things where our own will is no longer done in our body to understand this a little better we could perhaps look at Hebrews chapter 10

where we read something about how Jesus came we read in Hebrews chapter 10 in verse 5 therefore when he comes into the world that is when the Lord Jesus came into the world he says sacrifice and offering thou hast not desired what did that mean this is a quotation from Psalm 40 verses 6 onwards to 8 sacrifice and offering thou hast not desired in other words God was not really looking for those external sacrifices that were characteristic of the old testament temple ritual it's not external sacrifice that God is looking for primarily he is looking for that inward sacrifice which we shall see further down in Hebrews 10 but a body thou hast prepared for me there is a difference between sacrificing outside the body and inside the body a body thou hast prepared for me again it says in verse 6

of Hebrews 10 in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast taken no pleasure then I said behold I have come in the role of the book it's written of me to do thy will O God most people all human beings really do their own will in their body until they are radically converted and become disciples of Jesus when they begin to do God's will the entire human race consists of people who do their own will what is it that God desires as a sacrifice this human self will that is what Jesus sacrificed within his body as he saw in John 6.38 I came from heaven not to do my own will or in other words to sacrifice my own will in order that I may do the will of him who sent me like he said in the garden of Gethsemane not my will I sacrifice my will so that thine may be done father so he

denied one will in order to do the will of his father and that's what we see here I have come to do thy will O God in this body which you have prepared for me God gave Jesus a body and what did God want Jesus to do not to offer external sacrifices but this inward one that is the meaning of sacrifice and offering thou hast not desired and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast taken no pleasure all those things really didn't please God it was the inward yielding of Jesus will which brought satisfaction to God's heart and this is the brokenness that is symbolized in the breaking of bread when he broke it he gave thanks we

read in Matthew 26 and verse 26 he gave thanks he blessed and he broke it's not enough to be blessed we need to be broken too he gave thanks in the

sacrifice of his own will to his father Jesus was thankful he didn't offer up his will reluctantly but with thanks giving and then he gave that to his disciples we read in Matthew 26 verse 26 saying take eat have a fellowship with me in this in this brokenness just like when Jesus commanded baptism they didn't understand the meaning fully only later on the Holy Spirit came and revealed it to them in the same way in the breaking of bread when they actually broke bread with Jesus they didn't understand the spiritual implication of it all but when the Holy Spirit came he opened their eyes to understand the meaning of it and now the Spirit of God reveals this to us too it's a fellowship with Jesus in that broken body it's a thankful offering of our own human will that we might do the will of

the Father in this body which now God has given us for we are to follow in Jesus' footsteps otherwise our taking part in the Lord's table becomes a meaningless ritual we read in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 that this also pictures our being one body in Christ for it is one loaf that we break 1 Corinthians 10.17 since there is one bread we who are many are one body we all partake of that one bread so this body that Jesus speaks of here is not just his physical body which was broken inwardly and broken physically on the cross but also it refers to the spiritual body of Christ of which he has made us members and when we partake of one loaf we are testifying thereby like all those many grains of wheat have been powdered and crushed to become one in the same way that we want the Lord to powder and

crush us so that we can be one we testify to a longing for fellowship not only with Jesus in the way that he went but also with one another in the body of Christ this is the meaning of taking part in the Lord's table and to drink of that cup he said this is my blood of the new covenant Matthew 26 and verse 28 and there is an expression that we find in Hebrews chapter 13 where we read that God brought up from the dead Hebrews 13 and verse 20 the great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant the blood is called the blood of the eternal covenant of the new covenant it was blood that Jesus shed in striving against sin as we read in Hebrews 12 4 you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin and the previous verses indicate clearly

that the writer has Jesus in mind there and comparing our striving against sin with his saying you haven't striven against sin like he did he was willing to shed his blood in his striving against sin in other words he was willing rather to die than to sin he was willing to shed his blood rather than sin that is the blood that Jesus shed on the cross blood that was shed in obedience willing to obey God even if it meant death to himself that attitude and we drink of that cup and say Lord that's exactly the same attitude that I want to have towards sin you remember Jesus asked James and John once are you willing to drink are you able to drink of the cup which I drink of they readily said yes but it's not easy God wills it through the power of the spirit we can live it but we must do it with

understanding to drink of that cup is to have that same attitude that Jesus had towards sin I would rather die than sin and through that blood which Jesus shed we have free forgiveness but forgiveness is not to be exploited we don't take advantage of God because he forgives us the word of God says that there is forgiveness with God so that he may be feared Psalm 130 and verse 4 God forgives us so that we might fear him so that we do not sin again like Jesus told the woman caught in adultery in John chapter 8 I do not condemn you but go and sin no more that is the gospel that is the eternal covenant that is the new covenant that God has made with man to forgive us and then to free us from sins power and then Jesus goes on to speak about his second coming verse 29 of Matthew 26 but I say to

you I will not drink of this fruit of the wine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom that is the kingdom that is going to be set up when Jesus returns to earth and in that day in glorified bodies you and I if you are faithful can sit with Jesus and drink and eat and drink with him again at his table and then we read in verse 30 after singing a hymn they went out to the mount of olives here was Jesus knowing that he was going to be crucified the next morning knowing that he was going to be unjustly accused and condemned in a few moments singing a hymn he was full of the joy of his father he knew what was awaiting him in a few hours and all he could do was sing a hymn of praise to his father that is the right attitude with which to go to the cross

and that's where Jesus has set as an example after singing a hymn they went out to the mount of olives then Jesus said to them you will all fall away because of me this night for it is written I will strike down the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered that was a prophecy from Zechariah chapter 13 verse 7 what Jesus said was going to be fulfilled you're all going to stumble he said because of me you're all going to leave me alone and go away but he didn't reproach them for that they didn't have the power of the Holy Spirit so he knew that they were weak but one day they'd be different when they were filled with the Holy Spirit and endued with the Spirit's power and after I've been raised verse 32 Jesus said I will go before you to Galilee and there we see Jesus preparing

his disciples for that moment when he would be crucified and he would leave them he was coming to the end of his time with them on earth and he tells them I will go before you to Galilee he tells them I'm going to be raised up and I'm going to come back you don't have to be discouraged there is a resurrection beyond the cross for him and for us too if we follow him all the way

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/8/SID8322.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/matthew-ch2514-2632/>

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