

# The Humanity of Jesus

by Zac Poonen

---

*Zac Poonen's sermon explores the profound humility of Jesus and the importance of learning from His example to fulfill God's purpose for humanity.*

**Duration:** 25:47

**Scripture:** Exodus 28:38, Matthew 1:1-17, Matthew 11:29, John 8:32, 2 Corinthians 3:6, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Philippians 2:5, Hebrews 6:1

**Topics:** "Christology", "Humility Of Christ"

---

## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of knowing the truth to be set free from bondage, highlighting how ignorance can lead to slavery. It discusses the significance of learning from Jesus personally, not just from a book, and the difference between the Old and New Testaments in having a personal example to follow. The humility of Jesus is explored, showcasing how he deliberately chose a humble birth and lineage to identify with sinners and save them.

---

## Transcript

We have been considering in these sessions through these weeks what God's purpose for man really was when he created man. And progressively we've been looking at God's purpose, God's provision, and now that man has fallen, how God made a way for man to be restored to that original purpose by sending Christ, giving us the Holy Spirit to dwell within. And I have repeatedly stressed how a lot of people are missing out on God's provision.

Jesus said you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. If we don't know the truth we will remain in bondage. And that is the condition of many, many Christians.

Because they are ignorant, they are bound. It's the opposite of what Jesus said. I could say, Jesus is implying, if you remain ignorant of the truth, you will remain in slavery and bound.

But if you know the truth, the truth will set you free. Free from sin, free from all the hang-ups you have in your personality because of tragedies you faced in your childhood or problems caused you by others, you can be set free from everything. There is not a single problem in your life that God cannot solve.

There is no hangover from the past that God cannot deal with. This is the wonderful message of the Gospel. It doesn't matter what your background is, where you came from, how you were brought up, God can solve everything and make you a glorious Christian.

Make you like Christ increasingly if you are willing. You know Jesus once used these words in Matthew 11 and verse 29. He said, take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart.

Now in an earlier study, we saw the exhortation in Philippians 2.5 saying, have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Have this attitude in you which is in Christ. Now, Jesus is saying the same thing here.

Learn from me, he says. Not just from a book, learn from me. Learn from me.

Do you know one big difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament is this? That in the Old Testament, they only had a book. No man could stand up in the Old Testament and say, follow me, look at me, learn from me. But in the New Testament, we don't only have a book, we have a person.

The person of Jesus Christ dead and risen and the Holy Spirit to show us what Christ is like and to make us like him. Now which do you think is easier? To learn swimming on a blackboard or to learn swimming by a person jumping into the river and showing you what to do? You know the answer. From a book, you can have all the theory of swimming explained there, you may never learn it.

You still go and jump in the river, you drown. But if you have a person who has got into the river and says, see what I'm doing and follow me, it is so much easier. That is one of the big differences between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant.

In the Old Covenant, they had a book, the book of the law. In the New Covenant, we have the word not written down, but the word made flesh. And so when we look at the written word, our purpose is through the written word of scripture to see the living word, Jesus Christ himself.

So he says, take my yoke upon you and learn of me. How can I learn from Christ? It's not like you study chemistry or physics sitting in a classroom and listening to a lecture and you can learn chemistry, mathematics, physics, every subject in the world you can learn by sitting in a classroom. But you can't learn swimming sitting in a classroom.

You can't learn horse riding sitting in a classroom. You can't learn to drive a car or a plane sitting in a classroom. That needs hands-on experience.

And to become like Christ, to learn from Christ, you need experience in daily life. For that, he says, take my yoke upon you. Now, we know in our villages, everybody knows what a yoke is.

The fields are plowed with two oxen plowing together with a yoke upon their necks and they pull the plow together and that's how the field is plowed. And when, say, one of those bullocks dies and they get a new little bullock who doesn't know head or tail about plowing and doesn't know how to plow a straight furrow, they yoke that new junior bullock with an experienced senior bullock. And as it were, the senior bullock tells the junior bullock, take my yoke upon you and learn from me.

Just walk at the pace I'm walking. Walk in the direction I'm walking. And in a few weeks, you'll be able to plow a straight furrow.

You'd have learned from me. So it's not vocal communication, do this, do that. It's hands-on experience.

And so when Jesus says, take my yoke upon you, he's saying, come into a partnership with me, into a fellowship with me, and let's learn, let me teach you, let me teach you something. Learn from me, from my life, from the way I live. Look at my earthly life.

How do I take this yoke? I, first of all, submit to the authority of Christ completely. In the Old Testament, to be under the yoke meant to be under someone's authority. We read in the Old Testament of the yoke of the king of Babylon.

The Israelites came under that yoke. Now Jesus invites us to a very pleasant yoke because he says later on, Matthew 11, he says, my yoke is easy. It's very kind and pleasant type of yoke.

It's not a heavy yoke like the yoke of the king of Babylon on the Israelites. No, it's a easy, pleasant yoke. And my load is light.

The Lord does not force us to do something. Anything forced, if you do it, even if it's a good thing, it becomes a dead work. You know, in the Old Testament, they only had good works and evil works.

In the New Testament, you read about good works, evil works, and in Hebrews 6, 1 and Hebrews 9, 14, you read about dead works. And it says we got to repent of dead works. We must have our dead works cleansed in the blood of Christ.

What are dead works? In a very simple way, dead works are good works done with the wrong motive. I could preach, is that a good work? Sure. But if I preach for money, it's a dead work.

I can sing a song in a church, good work, but if it's sung in order to get some honor for myself, it's a dead work. I can give money for God's work, that's a good thing. But if I give that money because I want to get some honor for myself or I want my name to be published somewhere, it's a dead work immediately.

Good works become dead works. Sinful works are already dead. But the great tragedy is where good works become dead works.

And you read about that even in the Old Testament, where in the book of Exodus, where the Lord spoke to Moses concerning the dress of Aaron, one of the things he said was that Aaron has got to have a plate on his forehead saying, holy to the Lord. And the purpose of that, Exodus 28 and verse 38, was to take away the sin there is in the holy things that Israel consecrates. There is sin in the holy things.

And that is dead works. So Jesus says, don't just mechanically do something written in scripture, it'll be a dead work. You can take a verse of scripture, mechanically obey it, and force other people to obey it mechanically according to the letter of the law.

2 Corinthians 3, I think it's verse 6, says the letter kills. You can follow the letter of scripture and it'll kill. And you can take that letter of scripture and preach it to other people in your church, it'll kill them.

That's not the way to learn. No. The way to learn is to take the yoke of Jesus upon us and to learn from him, to look at his example.

So in 2 Corinthians 3, after it says that the letter will kill, you go to the written letter of the law, 2 Corinthians 3, 6, it'll kill. He says, in contrast, the Holy Spirit gives life. So how does the Holy Spirit give life? By showing us when we read scripture, not a verse or a commandment, but the glory of Jesus Christ.

So in other words, when I look at scripture, I have to see Jesus there. That's what it says further down in 2 Corinthians 3, in verse 18, with unveiled face I look into this mirror of God's word and what do I see there? I see the glory of Jesus Christ there. And little by little, the Holy Spirit changes me into that likeness.

And so we see here that the whole purpose with which God has given us the scriptures is not just for us to follow a letter of the law. That'll make you a Pharisee. You know, the Pharisees who killed Jesus Christ were people who followed the letter of the law.

And they kept on trying to find fault with people. They would catch a woman in adultery and go to the letter of the law and want to stone her to death and Jesus would set her free. Because they didn't understand the heart of God.

They kept the letter of the law and they wanted to kill people, punish people. Whereas God was always interested in redeeming people. If God sees a man in sin, he wants to save that man.

When the Pharisees saw a man in sin, they were considering which verse to use to put him out of the church. So you find there are people like that even today. When they see a person in sin, they want to find which verse is there to condemn him.

Whereas when God sees a man in sin, he wants to see how he can save him. So that's an example of how the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. You go to the letter of the law and you'll find a verse to hit somebody on the head with.

Whereas if you go to the Holy Spirit, he'll show you the glory of Jesus there. And if you want life, you've got to see Jesus right through scripture. And say, Lord, help me to understand your nature.

Learn from me. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For example, if we were to look at the humility of Jesus Christ, you know, the world can see the glory of God in creation.

Yeah, there's a glory there in the stars, the planets and all the wonders there are in this universe. But to the disciple of Jesus, the glory of God is not seen in creation primarily, but in the character and person of Jesus Christ, in his humility, in the way he lived on this earth. When we think of the very fact that he did not consider equality with God as something to be held on to and grasped, but came down and became a man, that itself is a tremendous step in humility.

I mean, just picture this. If you as a dignified human being want to help a worm, a wretched worm crawling on the ground, and you love that worm so much because it doesn't know how to conduct itself, you become a worm in order to get, you know, if you go to that worm as a man, the worm will be terrified, but you become a worm in order to communicate to that worm and lead it to a higher life. This is a picture of what Jesus Christ did.

The difference between God and man is much greater than the difference between man and a little worm that crawls on the ground. And for me to become a worm would be a tremendous step in humility if I wanted to help that worm. For God to become a man is a million times greater step in humility.

And if we don't see that, we have not seen the glory of Jesus Christ. This is why I say I'm against all these people who say that Jesus was a great prophet or a philosopher or a religious leader. No, he was not.

He was the Son of God who came in human form. He was God manifest in the flesh. He was not just one of the many incarnations of God.

No, he was the only incarnation of God on the face of this earth. If you say anything other than that, you rob him of his glory. He was God manifest in the flesh.

And there we see his humility, just the very fact that he became a man. Even if he came to earth as an emperor to rule this earth, that would have been humility. For God Almighty to come to this earth as an emperor would have been a fantastic step down.

But the wonderful thing is that when he came to earth, he did not choose to be an emperor. The wise men who came hearing of the birth of Jesus looked for him in the wrong place. They followed the star and when they came to Jerusalem, we read in Matthew chapter 2 that they said, hey, we don't need to follow the star anymore because the king of the Jews, where will he be born? In a palace, of course.

So they stopped following the star and that's where those wise men became foolish and they went to the palace to find where the king of the Jews was born and the people in the palace did not have a clue that the king of the Jews was even born. These people from way down in the east came looking for him and the people who had the Bible, they didn't even know the king of the Jews was born. King Herod goes to the chief priests and scribes and they say, yeah, yeah, it says in the book of Micah he's going to be born in Bethlehem.

But they couldn't care less about going to Bethlehem. So the wise men come out and what do they do? They became wise again. They followed the star.

And when they followed the star, they get the surprise of their life that this one who was the king of the Jews is in a little house, a little hut. They didn't come in time for the birth. If they had come in time for the birth, they would have seen him in a stable with the cows and the donkeys.

They came a little late. Perhaps they were held up because they stopped following the star and they went, deviated and went to Herod's palace instead of going straight to Bethlehem. If they had come to Bethlehem, they would have seen that wonderful sight of the son of God born in a stable, but they missed that.

By the time they came, he'd moved out of the stable and was living in a house. And it says they came and saw him in the house. But what I want to say is that even when he came to earth, he further humbled himself.

How much did he humble himself there? Not just a little bit. I mean, if he was born in a middle-class family, that itself would have been humility. If he had been born in a servant's home, that would have been even a greater humility.

But think of this. He was born in a cow shed. In my entire life, I have never heard of anyone who was so poor that his child was born in a cow shed with the cows and donkeys.

Never. I don't know if there was any human being on the face of the earth who was so poor that his mother could deliver him only in a cow shed. That's where the Lord Jesus Christ is unique.

Why did he go from the highest place in heaven to the lowest place on earth in a cow shed with the donkeys? Because he wanted to save people. He came underneath everybody in order to lift everybody up. How can you lift people up if you don't go underneath them? You can't sit on top of them as a ruler and expect to lift them up.

You can give orders to them if you sit as a ruler. But if you want to lift them up, you got to go underneath them. And he was determined to go underneath every single human being that ever lived.

And that's why he was born in a cow shed. The lowest possible place to be born in. He was born there, and there we see his humility.

Now the wonderful thing is that this was not accidental. See, you may have been born at home or in a hospital, but you never had a choice in where you were to be born. You didn't choose the country you are to be born in or the family you are to be born in, because you were just conceived in your mother's womb and depending on your parents' social status, that's where they were born.

You could have been born in an air-conditioned room in a hospital or in a room in a house. You didn't choose where to be born. There was only one person who was born on this earth, who chose where he wanted to be born, and that was Jesus Christ our Lord, because he planned his birth from heaven.

He planned his birth for thousands of years. The seed of the woman is promised in Genesis chapter 3, and from then itself there are 4,000 years. But he knew about that birth even before, and supposing you were to plan your own birth on earth, which family would you choose? Which town would you choose? Which place, physically which place would you choose, which location for you to be born? Would you choose a place like Nazareth, which the Bible says, can any good thing come out of Nazareth, Nathanael said? It had such a bad reputation.

Would you choose a town with a bad reputation to be born in? Would you choose a poor carpenter's family to be born in, or would you choose some rich man's home? Where would you choose to be born? Would you choose a despised slave nation like Israel which was under the Romans? And which location would you choose? Would you choose a cow shed? Why did Jesus deliberately choose all these places? And not only that, you see his humility in his genealogy. In Matthew chapter 1, generally speaking when the Jewish people wrote their genealogies, they never mentioned any women's names. It was only men's names.

It was a male dominated society. But in this genealogy of Jesus which goes all the way up to Joseph who is the husband of Mary, his mother, we read the names of four women, and three of them are in the physical ancestry of Jesus Christ. The first one is in Matthew chapter 1 verse 3, Tamar, who produced a son called Pyrrhus.

And the interesting thing there if you read way back in Genesis chapter 38 is that this woman Tamar was actually Judah's daughter-in-law. It was incest in the family. Father-in-law and daughter-in-law had sex and they had a child and that child's name was Pyrrhus.

And Jesus from heaven chooses that line. Say I'll come through that line. Would you like to choose a line for your ancestry which involves incest? Father-in-law, daughter-in-law relationship? Would you even want that or would you avoid it completely? He could have avoided it.

He could have chosen a pure line. No, he chose that. Then the second woman mentioned here is Rahab in verse 5. Rahab was the most well-known prostitute in Jericho, not even a Jewish person.

Someone who belonged to the land of Jericho, probably a Canaanite family. A prostitute who earned her money by selling her body for sex. Would you want everybody to know that your grandmother was a prostitute in the city? Would you choose such a line if you had the choice? And even if it was, would you put it on the first page of your biography? This is the very first page.

The third woman mentioned here is Ruth. Ruth is called here the wife of Boaz. And Ruth was a Moabitess.

That means she descended from Moab. Moab was one of the sons of Lot, born through his incest with his own daughter. Here's another line of incest.

And the fourth woman is Bathsheba in verse 6 of Matthew 1 who David committed adultery with. She was not in the physical ancestry of Mary, but was in the physical ancestry of Joseph. But it's very interesting that all these four women have involved with some type of sexual deviation and sin in their ancestry.

Ruth through her ancestor Moab, Rahab directly, and Tamar directly, Bathsheba directly. Why did Jesus choose such a line? You know, saturated with sinful people because he came to save sinners. He wanted people to know.

I have identified myself with a sinful line. There is no sin in him, but he identified himself totally with a terribly sinful line so that he could save people who have been involved in incest, who've been involved in adultery, who've been prostitutes. It doesn't matter who.

He came to save sinners. And in order to save sinners, he didn't care what people thought about him. His humility was so total.

He identified himself completely with the human race. And there we see his tremendous humility. And there, you know, when we compare our own pride, it's so foolish.

May God help us to learn something from the humility of Jesus. If the Holy Spirit is to make us like Jesus, he must bring us to the place where we don't despise sinners. We recognize that we are sinners ourselves and we are willing to identify with them even if we are free from sin in order to save them from their wretched condition.

There we see the glory of Jesus' humility. The Holy Spirit wants to make you like that. God bless you.

---

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/TAiLBC6n9Dw.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/the-humanity-of-jesus/>

# *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)**