

The Most Repeated Statement of Jesus

by Zac Poonen

This sermon delves into the most oft-repeated statement of Jesus in the Gospels, emphasizing the importance of losing our self-life for the sake of Christ to find eternal life. It explores the concept of hating our life in this world to partake in the life of God, focusing on the need for brokenness and honesty before God to experience true transformation and blessings. The message encourages seeking God alone, being willing to be despised for following Christ wholeheartedly, and living a life that leaves a lasting impact on others.

Scripture: Matthew 16:25, John 12:25, Genesis 32:26, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Hebrews 11:21, 1 John 4:17

Topics: "Self-Denial", "Transformation in Christ"

Description

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Transcript

I was thinking of what is the most oft repeated statement of Jesus in the Gospels. Wouldn't that be an interesting thing to study? The Holy Spirit inspired the four Gospels and some statements of Jesus said only once. But I studied what was the most oft repeated statement of Jesus in the four Gospels.

I don't know whether any of you have studied that and tried to find out. I'll tell you what it is and it may surprise us. It is, here's one, it occurs seven times in the Gospels and here's one of them, Matthew 16 and verse 25.

Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. That is the most oft repeated statement in the Gospels.

But the Holy Spirit felt that that was necessary to be repeated seven times in the four Gospels. I better take heed to it. And if you look at the last reference to it, it's in John chapter 12, where it comes in a slightly different way.

Here we read it as someone who's willing to lose his life for the Lord's sake. But here in John 12, 25, it's written in a slightly different way. He who loves his life loses it.

But he who hates, hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. Well, I want eternal life. This is the life of God, not just living for eternity.

People who go to hell live for eternity. But this is speaking about the life of God, which is the only eternal life, life that had no beginning and no end. And it says, the way I can partake of it, in fact, Jesus came to give us eternal life.

And this is eternal life. You might know me, the only true God. But here it says here that it is by hating my life in this world that I can keep it, my soul life, the life which we seek to preserve so much, the life which we want other people to admire.

I think I quoted a statement of Madame Blanc once, where she says that there is a way of the Christian life where the graces of the Christian life are seen in us and people admire us and say, boy, what a Christ-like person. But he says, if you go beyond that, your life of faith in the Lord, where you lose your life, you won't be admired. You'll be despised and rejected of all men, just like he heard from Isaiah 53.

So is our following of the Lord making us despised and rejected or more and more admired for the Christ-like way we speak and the Christ-like way we behave? There can be a lot of honor-seeking in all that. He who hates his life in this world with absolutely no interest in a reputation for gentleness or holiness or any such thing, he will keep it a life eternal. When we hear a lot of, there are a lot of good things written in the scriptures that we can do and a lot of good things that we learn and we share with one another.

But we have to be careful, brothers and sisters, that we don't engage in a self-improvement program, that our meetings are not a self-improvement program where I become a slightly better person, more easy to get along with, and very nice and gracious, a good husband at home and a good wife at home. A lot of people like that who are unconverted, who are never going to make it into God's kingdom, who don't have eternal life, because they're not doing it for the glory of God. It's a certain satisfaction I get that I have become a little better person.

I don't hate my life. I may be loving my life, loving my reputation. So, the only escape from all this, if we steadfastly seek to listen to the Holy Spirit speaking to us, and the commandment says, whatever you do, even the most ordinary thing like eating and drinking, do all for the glory of God.

Do everything for the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10, verse 31, and the Holy Spirit takes it down to the most ordinary thing that we do so many times a day, eating and drinking. That means it covers every other area of life.

Whatever you do, do all for the glory of God. Don't do things to just improve your impression you make on others, or to find some satisfaction in yourself that you have become a better person. That's not the glory of God.

Jesus did not just seek to be a better person or to live a life that brought honor. In fact, he was despised and rejected by all men. And that's why God has to do a work of brokenness in us.

You know, like the statement of Madam Jones, I quoted earlier, there's a way where we become so Christ-like in our own understanding that people admire us. They say, wow, what a Christ-like person, what a humble person, what a loving person. But, as I said, she goes on to say, and many people don't understand this because they don't go that far.

They stop at this point. The way of faith where we become misunderstood and despised and our reputation goes. That's a good question, whether our Christianity is making us lose our reputation or whether it's enhancing our reputation because we are behaving so well now.

We all need to experience a brokenness in our life. That's the one thing God pursues. You know, and I think of that story of Jacob, just one that always comes to my mind when I think of brokenness.

How God tried, God had a tremendous plan for Jacob. And he was very shrewd and all that, but God could not accomplish his purpose in Jacob's life because he had broken him so thoroughly that the Bible says in Hebrews chapter 11, it says, he leaned upon a star. He walked with a walking stick for the rest of his life.

And that is written in a chapter like Hebrews, where it speaks about red seas being split open and walls of Jericho being pulled down and people shutting the mouths of lions. And in the midst of Abraham getting a son at the age of 100, in the midst of all these miracles, you find this miracle of Jacob leaning upon his star. That's amazing.

I say, what's the great miracle there? In Hebrews 11, Jacob leaned upon his star. That's Hebrews 11 and verse 21. I see that was the greatest miracle in Hebrews 11.

If someone were to ask you, what is the greatest miracle you read in Hebrews chapter 11? Would you ever think of verse 21? That Jacob leaned upon his star. I believe that is the greatest miracle. Because all those other things are external.

God could do, God can do a hundred, split open a hundred red seas and pull down a hundred walls of Jericho. But to break one man, it took him such a long time. It took him years.

It didn't take God years to split open the red sea. I see that as it didn't take God years to shut the mouths of lions, but to break Jacob, make him for the rest of his life, a broken man that he had to walk with a walking stick from a very young age. That's what made him a powerful man.

For us in the New Testament, that means to hate my own life. Turn with me to Genesis chapter 32. There we read of this final breaking of God, where Jacob had to lean upon this walking stick for the rest of his life.

It's a very favorite passage of mine in the Old Testament, a flight to our own life. Jacob was left alone and there wrestled with him, a man, until daybreak. This was God trying to tell him, I've been struggling with you for years.

I've been trying to break you. And I wonder whether God says that to any of us. First, he tries to break us away from sin.

Okay. I think most of us are finished with that. Now he seeks to break us away from trying to build a reputation as a very godly person in NCCS, who's admired by all the others, who, when he shares something, it's always so blessed.

Yeah, yeah. You have to be left alone with God. He is precious, and God deals with us alone, just he and me, there's nobody else.

Jacob was left alone. Have you had experiences like this, my brother and sister, where it's just you and God, not even your wife or husband or anybody else, it's you and God. But he deals with you, and in ways

which you can't even talk about because it's so inward, but you know he has succeeded in breaking you.

It says he, when he did not succeed, he dislocated his thigh bone. That's why he had to lean upon his top for the rest of his life. That's a great miracle.

And then he tested him, saying, let me go, Genesis 32, 26. He's testing him. Are you happy? He said, no, I'm not happy.

Lord, you've got to bless me. If you really want God's highest blessing, anything, whether it's the fullness of the Holy Spirit, a lot of people pray for that. What about praying for freedom from the love of money with as much passion as we pray for the fullness of the Spirit? How many of you do that? The passion we pray for the fullness of Spirit, Lord, free me from the love of money, because I find it deeply rooted in my life.

I will not let you go, verse 26, until you answer this prayer. That's the man who gets answered from God who is desperate. Lord, I will not let you go unless you free me from the love of money, 100%, unless you fill me with the Holy Spirit.

That we'd be ready to pray. You know, brothers and sisters, we love ourselves far more than we realize. We haven't understood that word in John 12.

He who hates his own life, his self-life, his reputation, his soul life. You have to cry to God and say, Lord, you've got to bless me. You've got to bless me in this way, not all these other things.

And then the Lord asked him a question. What is your name? You remember when Isaac asked him that same question years ago, when he put on animal skin and all, he wanted to get the birds right. The same question, Isaac asked him, what's your name? He said, Esau.

But now he doesn't try to fool God. You know, Jacob means deceiver. That's the meaning of it.

A supplanter, a grabber, one who grabs what belongs to other people. He came out grabbing his brother's leg and that's why they called him Jacob, deceiver, supplanter, grabber. And when the Lord asks you, forget about what people think of you.

What is your name? What are you really like? Will you tell him the truth? Lord, I deceive people, giving them an impression about my life that's not true. What's your name? Lord, my name is lover of money, a lustful man. That's my name, Lord.

I tell you, if you're honest with God, he'll change you. I've seen that. The Lord says, okay, since you're honest, verse 28, you will no longer be called a deceiver.

You will no longer be a lover of money. You will no longer be a lustful person. You will be a prince of God as well.

And he was blessed there when he had seen, verse 30, God face to face. And verse 31, the sun rose upon him. That is when the sun rises upon our life.

That is God's choice for us, God's way for us. And that's the way we should say, Lord, these are things, you know, that first sentence is he was left alone with God. You cannot do this in public.

You cannot do this in a meeting. It has to be alone with God. God speaks to you.

I tell you, you know, in the busy world in which we live with so many other things to do during the day, I have found personally, the only time I can have quiet time with God is the time when I'm awake at night, early in the morning, before you get out of bed, or before you go to sleep at night, or in between if you happen to wake up. Those are the times in a busy world where you don't have wildernesses to go to. That's the place where, like Jacob, you can be alone with God.

I will encourage you, not asking you to stay awake at night. I mean, we all need sleep. But if it happens like that, take those times.

Get alone with God, quietly. Don't make any noise. Don't disturb your husband or your wife.

They're sleeping next to you. Alone with God and let God speak to you. Be like Jacob, is alone with God and let God speak to you.

And say to him what you want. I will not let you go, Lord, unless you bless me. The Lord said, bless you with what? Tell him the truth.

This is my name. I don't want that to be my name anymore. I want to be a prince of God, a man who has, like God told you, power with God and power with man.

What a wonderful life, way to live, brothers. Every one of you, brothers and sisters, can have power with God. And that'll make you effective in your, as you encounter people.

People may hate you, but they'll never forget you. They'll recognize, once in my life, I met a man who knew God. He was not just a person who had a lot of religion or religious talk.

He was a man who lived before God's face. He knew God. He was not interested in anybody's opinion about him.

What a wonderful thing. That's how Jesus was. I mean, do you think the person who met Jesus would ever forget him? No, never.

And I believe, you know, it says in 1 John 3, is it verse 21, where it says, as Jesus is, so are we in this world. Sorry, 1 John, yeah, 1 John 4, it is. In 1 John 4, 17, as Jesus is, so are we in this world.

So I believe it should be like that. That, not that we get a reputation for being very holy in NCCF or already being kind or man generous or any such thing. That's all garbage.

We're not interested in that. But that when we are dead and gone or we move away somewhere else and people don't see us for years, they never forget the influence you had on their life. I believe that's true.

For that, I have to hate my life in this world. That's the only way. May God help us.

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