

The Sermon on the Mount - Part 1

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of living under Christ's authority while fulfilling the Great Commission through obedience and discipleship.

Duration: 1:05:27

Scripture: Matthew 5:3, Matthew 5:6-11

Topics: "Christian Living", "Righteousness"

Description

This sermon delves into the foundational truths of the Christian life as outlined in the Sermon on the Mount. It emphasizes the importance of being established in righteousness, humility, mercy, and peacemaking, even in the face of persecution. The key themes include surrendering to God, hungering for righteousness, being merciful, and standing firm for the truth of Jesus Christ, even when faced with opposition.

Transcript

The last few weeks we have been looking at some foundational truths so that we can be established, lay a good foundation and build a good Christian life. So just to briefly review, we were looking at two passages which we said were like two sides of a coin, two sides of the Great Commission. One is Mark 16, where Jesus said, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, and those who believe and are baptized will be saved.

And those who go out and preach like that, their ministry will be confirmed by their casting out demons in Jesus' name, healing the sick, and speaking in tongues, and many things like that, supernatural miracles that would confirm the gospel whenever it is taken to some new, unreached area. It happened in the first century, it's happening today, even in India. And the other side of the Great Commission, which is mostly neglected, this first part that I mentioned is being done by lots of people, not enough, because there are still millions of people who have not heard the gospel, so there is a need for that to continue.

But if that work is done without this second part, then it becomes an incomplete job, and even the effect of that evangelism will finally be lost. So, in Matthew 28, verse 18, we see the other side of the Great Commission, where Jesus said, All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me, therefore go. And I mentioned, when we studied that, that the Lord never said, because there is a great need, go.

That's how a lot of preaching is today. No. If you go on the basis of need, I can prophesy, you'll end up confused, end up as a grumbler, murmurer against others, and comparing your own ministry with others, and frustrated, and depressed, and probably end up with a nervous breakdown.

It's happened to many people. We don't go to meet a need. We go because Jesus has got all authority in heaven and earth, and tells us to go.

That is why I don't believe that like some people do in our country, when they have a baby, they say, Oh Lord, I'm going to dedicate this for your service, like Hannah dedicated Samuel. You can't do that. You can't do it, because if God doesn't call your son, how in the world can he go out and serve him? That's a crazy idea.

It's a non-Christian idea. The only person who can go out into full-time Christian service is one who goes because Jesus, one who recognizes that Christ has got all authority in heaven and earth, and he tells me to go, then you better go. And if you go on that basis, he'll support you till the end of your life.

So that's the basis on which he said go. It's very, very important. It's such a simple thing that many people don't notice.

Matthew 28, 18, all authority has been given to me in heaven and earth. Do you submit to that authority in your life? Therefore, therefore means on the basis of that authority, go. And every servant of God in these 20 centuries who has gone on that basis, not because there's a need, but who's gone on the basis over his life, and Christ has commanded him to go, whether it's like the Apostle Paul in the first century, or anybody in the 20th or 21st century, they always succeed in their ministry, because God backs them up.

All the opposition of men, criticism and abuse of men cannot touch them. It's very important. That's the only basis on which we can build a church, and that's the only basis on which we built all CFC churches.

Not because there was a need. A lot of people do evangelism on the basis of need, okay, God bless them, I don't criticize them. But I say, we must look at the need, but we must do God's will.

And I'll show you, you know, when we see the balance in scripture, I believe the fundamental problem with a lot of Christians is they don't see the balance in scripture. Like people who talk about the fruit of the spirit, but don't believe in the gifts of the spirit, or people who talk about the gifts of the spirit and don't emphasize the fruit of the spirit, it's always imbalanced. Or people emphasize grace, but not truth, or people emphasize truth, but not grace, and the glory of God was seen in Jesus full of grace and truth.

And Jesus has had gifts of the spirit and fruit of the spirit. I'll give you another example of this very thing I'm talking about. Turn to John chapter 4, John's gospel chapter 4. The question is, should we look out and see the need in the world? Yes.

But should we act on the basis of that need? No. That's the point. John chapter 4, Jesus said in verse 35, John 4, 35, don't you say there are four months yet to the harvest? I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields.

What's he telling you to do? He's telling you to look at the need in the world. People who need to be saved, people who need to know about Jesus. Look on the fields, they are white for harvest.

And I want to say to you, any of you who do not lift up your eyes and look on the fields, who have no interest in seeing the need in the world, you're just not obeying that command of Jesus. I've spent years, I think more than 50 years, looking on the fields, trying to find out where is the need, what is the need for people to hear the gospel, etc. In India, I mean, that's my primary field is India.

Lift up your eyes and look on the fields. How many of us have obeyed that command to lift up our eyes and look on the fields for they are white to harvest? But what must you do? Don't rush out. The principle of action is in the previous verse.

It's my food, verse 34, is not to go out and meet the need. My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. There's a balance in those two verses.

You must see the need, but you must do the will of God. That's why Jesus never went out of Israel, even though there was a need in China and Africa and Europe, he never went there because his calling was to do the will of God. See the same thing in Matthew chapter 9. I'm just trying to show you this because when people accuse you saying you're not seeing the need, you're not doing anything about it, it's good to go back to the words of Jesus, not go by human reasoning.

Human reasoning can lead us astray. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean upon your human reason, says in Proverbs 3, Matthew 9, verse 36, seeing the people, Jesus saw the people, he felt compassion for them and we must also because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. They were confused and aimless, wandering around and his heart broke when he saw it.

So he said to his disciples, the harvest is plentiful, their workers are few, therefore rush out and meet the need? No. That's what today's Christians say. Therefore, pray to the Lord of harvest that he will send people whom he has chosen to each place.

He is the Lord of the harvest. When you go out on your own, you act as if you're the Lord of the harvest. He has to send out workers into his harvest.

I'll tell you from serving the Lord full-time for 46 years that I would never have survived until today if the Lord had not sent me out in the beginning. There was so much of opposition from demons and men and I'd have become a nervous breakdown years ago. But if the Lord sends you, you will complete your journey successfully in everything in your life.

Come under the authority of Jesus Christ. Even if you're not called to full-time Christian work, to any ministry, to anything, Lord, I want to live under your authority and no one will be able to fight against you. All the demons of hell will be scared of you.

All the human beings in the world can unite against you. They will not succeed. The secret is to live under the authority of Christ.

So that's very important for us to remember when we think of the second side of the Great Commission. All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. If you have the slightest doubt about that, you're going to have problems all through your life.

You know, whenever we get into a panic in some situation that you're facing, some threat that some people make against you, like, you know, when we faced a court case that religious people took against me. If you don't believe at that time that Jesus Christ has got all authority on earth, you'll get into a panic

and you'll compromise and do all types of things. But if you believe that Christ has got all authority on earth, everything is what he allows.

And in his own time, he will make it subside. Every storm he can still. Very important.

And there may be different storms that you face in life. The answer is to recognize all authority in heaven and earth is given to Jesus Christ and not just to recognize it. That won't solve your problem.

To come under that authority in your life. That's important. Not theoretically to believe, yeah, he's got all authority.

Have you come under that authority? Have you allowed him to run your life, to tell you what to do, tell you what not to do, how to react in different situations? Have you come under his authority? Then his authority will back you up. This tremendous authority that a Christian can have if he comes under the authority of Christ. Like the Roman soldier said, I'm a man under authority.

Therefore, I tell a soldier to go and he goes. That's how whenever Jesus spoke to a demon, he never had to speak to that demon twice. I've seen a lot of people cast out demons.

They're yelling and screaming and pulling people's hair. I say, you know the problem? The demons are laughing at them. They're saying, you guys are not under the authority of Christ and you're trying to cast me out.

You're not going to succeed. It's pointless. Don't even try it if you're not under the authority of Christ.

Leave them alone. Just go away. So if you're under the authority of Christ, demons will be afraid of you.

The devil will be afraid of you. Even all the people of the world turning against you. You don't have to fight with any of them.

When you fight with people, with human beings, you're showing that God is not backing me. He's not going to help me. So I better defend myself.

Why is it Jesus never had to defend himself? Because his father would back him. That's it. Why did Peter take out a sword? Because he didn't have faith that God would back him.

When you take out a sword, whether it's your tongue or anything else with which you try to fight with people, when you fight with your mother-in-law or your relatives, it's because you don't believe God is backing you. Because you say, God isn't backing me because I'm not under his authority, so I better fight for myself. I agree.

You better fight for yourself. And that's how you create such a mess. And you dishonor the name of Christ when you call yourself a Christian.

I've sometimes told people, you should not have a Christian name if you don't behave like a Christian. Because then you dishonor the Lord. Why not take some non-Christian name? So that at least you don't dishonor the name of the Lord.

But if you take a Christian name and you dishonor the Lord, the way you behave, that's a terrible insult. Recognize the authority of Christ in heaven and earth, and therefore, he said, go and make disciples in all

nations. We looked at that last time.

Baptize them. We saw them in the Bible. The meaning of baptism.

And we just want to look at the last part of that. Teaching them to observe everything that I commanded you, and lo, I am with you always. See, that's all authority in heaven and earth is given to me, and I am with you always.

If you submit to that authority, he's going to be with us all the time. Let's look at this. Teaching them, this is part of Jesus' command.

To observe some of the things I commanded you, no. Teaching them to observe every single thing that I commanded you, and I say that a person who comes under the authority of Christ and goes out to make disciples, it's not enough that he's made disciples. After he's made disciples, the whole purpose of church gatherings, what's the purpose of our meeting together in a church? We may think.

The most important thing in a church is what many people call praise and worship. Singing a lot of songs to God. I praise the Lord for that.

And I'll tell you this. I don't praise the Lord just on Sunday morning. I want to have a spirit of praise and thanksgiving to God seven days a week, 24 hours a day, which means zero murmuring, zero complaining, zero grumbling.

That is my type of praise and worship. 24-7, that I never grumble, never complain, never murmur about anything that happens in my life. I want to praise God and thank him.

If you're not doing that, I want to say, your praising God on Sunday morning is hypocrisy. It is hypocrisy. Here, you pretend to be so holy, and during the week, you're complaining and grumbling about, okay, you're like that, but say, go to God and say, Lord, I'm a hypocrite.

That's what I did. I said, Lord, I'm a hypocrite. I'm praising you on Sunday.

I also started like that. I'm praising you on Sunday, but not the rest of the week. Whatever Christianity is this, two hours on Sunday morning Christianity, that's not Christianity.

That's Old Testament religion, where on the Sabbath day, they would come and clap and sing. And I tell you, the way they praise God beats any Pentecostal church today. They would clap and blow trumpets and all types of things.

But then once the Saturday Sabbath was over, Sunday to Friday, they could complain and grumble and do what they like, because they came back the next Sabbath day to praise the Lord. That is a Jewish religion. It is Old Covenant.

And if you're like that, I want to say to you in Jesus' name, you're under the Old Covenant, even if you're sitting here. In the New Covenant, it is give thanks to God at all times for everything. Read 1 Thessalonians 5, 18 or Ephesians 5, 20.

At all times, for everything, in all circumstances. That is New Covenant, praising and thanking God. So Jesus called us to obey everything that he commanded, and the purpose of our coming together is not primarily to praise God, even though we do that.

But for some churches, that is the big thing. To me, it's not the big thing. If it helps me, if half an hour on Sunday morning of praise teaches me to praise God 24 hours a day, seven days a week, then it's a good thing.

If it doesn't, if it's just to ease my conscience, there's nothing wrong in praising God, but that's not the main purpose of coming together in a church. I'll tell you what the main purpose in coming together in a church is. It's written here, after you make them disciples and baptize them and they become members of your church, what should you do? Teach them to praise me? One of the things, yes, but teach them to observe every single thing I commanded you.

So the whole purpose of a Sunday meeting is to teach people to obey every single thing that Jesus commanded, because they don't know what Jesus commanded. So that is why I was saying that when we started out 38, 39 years ago, we started with teaching the first few chapters for you to know how to pray, what to pray for. Go to John 17.

What to teach, what did Jesus teach? Go to Matthew five, six and seven. Good to remember these chapters in your head. And the reason why I say it is I want to go to the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount and then begin.

Why do I go to the conclusion? Because I want you to see what Jesus said about all these things that he taught in Matthew five, six and seven. Listen, at the end of Matthew five, six and seven, he gave a conclusion in chapter seven, verse 13 to 27. So in verse 13 to 27, he speaks about two ways, two trees and two houses.

That's it. Two ways, two trees and two houses. Very simple.

Actually, the Bible is a very simple book and Jesus' teaching was very simple. Only Bible teachers make it very complicated. So in Matthew five, six and seven, after all that he taught, the very next thing that he says at the end in the conclusion is verse 13, enter away.

And as you study the Sermon on the Mount, you'll really discover that it's a very narrow way. And he said, verse 14, very few will find it. Boy, is that true? Absolutely.

Very few Christians take Matthew five, six and seven seriously. There are many people who have Bible studies on it, but they don't find that way in the time of temptation. It's one thing to understand it.

It's one thing to have a Bible study on it. It's a one thing to go through a verse by verse Bible study on it, but to find it, you'll find it this evening when you're tempted or this week in some difficult situation, there you have to discover whether you find that narrow way. For example, love your enemies.

You can have a Bible study on it, define what enemies are, define what love is, but you'll discover it when you have an enemy this week. That's where, that's where you find it. Here you can understand it, but there you'll find it.

And Jesus didn't say very few will understand it. I think millions will understand it, but very few, verse 14, will find it. The important thing, brother, sister, is whether you found this narrow way.

This is the way Jesus said that leads to life with a capital L. Life with a capital L. Jesus said, I came to give life and abundant life. John 10, 10. And here is the way to that abundant life, which anybody can enter if

he wants to.

The gate is narrow and the way is narrow. It's not just a crisis experience. There are crisis experiences in the Christian life, like a gate being born again, being filled with the spirit for the first time, and then there is a way of being continually filled with the Holy Spirit, of continually taking up the cross every day.

That's a way. And it's not just the gate that leads to life. Like some people have taught, you've entered in through the gate.

Great. You have entered life. No, that's not what Jesus taught.

The trouble with a lot of Christians is they're all got in through the gate and they're crowding around there. Millions of people hanging around the gate when they should be walking away. It's the way that leads to life.

There is a narrow gate and a narrow way. The gate is small and the way is narrow. That leads to life.

There is a crisis that leads to a process that is Christianity. And very few find it. I think millions find the gate.

Very few enter through it and walk the narrow way. So make sure as you study the Sermon on the Mount that you don't just understand it and say, Lord, every one of these things. I want to learn to follow it because you remember what we saw in Matthew 28.

Did you notice that? Not teach them all that I've commanded, but teach them to do all that I commanded. There's a lot of difference between teach them what I commanded and teach them to do what I commanded. That means I must not teach what I have not done.

Acts 1.1 says, Jesus began to do and then to teach. He did not practice what he preached. Like people say, he did not practice what he preached.

He preached what he had already practiced. And there's a lot of difference. He preached what he had practiced.

Acts 1.1. He did and then taught. And Jesus said, teach them to do. So you must teach when you have done.

The trouble with a lot of people today is they are preaching things which they haven't done. That's not this way Jesus taught. So teach them to do.

So you can only lead people into that narrow way if you're walking it yourself. And that's what I call it. The way of the cross, the way of self-denial, the way of being continually filled with the Holy Spirit, not once.

Okay. So that's about the way. There's a broad way which leads to destruction.

And then the next verse is also connected. Don't take a text out of context. Verse 15, beware of false prophets.

Again, in its context. What does it mean? False prophets are those who say the broad way also leads to eternal life. Or you don't have to walk the narrow way to get to life.

You can get to life without the narrow way. Those are the false prophets. Tell me if it means anything else in the context.

False prophets are those who will devalue the Sermon on the Mount and say it's not important. You know, there are believers who say that, or they call themselves believers, who say that the Sermon on the Mount is not for us. And who's it for? The, there are lots of people like that.

They say women wailing their heads. That was for the Corinthian Christians, not for us. Breaking your bread is written in the same chapter.

I suppose that's also for the Corinthian Christians. It's not for us. And what is for us? I don't find anything written for Zach Boonin in the Bible.

It's the Philippians and the Colossians. And you find your name in the Bible? What's written for you? It's amazing how, when people want to get out of obedience to a commandment, they say, that's not for us. That's for somebody else.

That's for the Jews. Going through the tribulation, that's for the Jews. That's not for us.

It's not what Jesus said. Jesus said that in the world, you'll face tribulation. The church will go through the great tribulation, whatever people may say.

So, and many things like this. Be careful that when you come to the new Testament, I know that the old Testament was for the Jews, Jesus said that. The Bible says the old covenant is abolished, Hebrews chapter eight.

That's why I don't go there. That's why I don't go for tithing and all those other things, sacrificing lambs and keeping the Sabbath. No, it's all finished.

So Colossians 2 says that was a shadow. But when it comes to the new Testament, the things that Jesus taught, the things the apostles taught, that's new covenant, you can't write that off as for somebody else. So the false prophets are those who say that's not for us, or those who say that this way is not so narrow.

You know how narrow the narrow way is? Jesus explained it once after a rich man came to him and would not give up his love of money. And went away and he said to his disciples, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter God's kingdom. There, Jesus defined the only place where he defined the size of that narrow gate, the eye of a needle.

That's pretty small. That's, he said, the way to life. So why is it a camel can't go through the eye of a needle? Why is it you and I can't go through the eye of a needle? Why is it you can't even put your finger through the eye of a needle? You know the answer.

It's too big. That's the thing. People who are big in their own estimation will never get into God's kingdom.

That's how you heard me say the three secrets of the Christian life are humility, humility, humility. I've expanded it to 10 secrets of the Christian life are, you know, same thing. Because people haven't understood it.

It's humility. If you humble yourself, you get grace. You can't be saved without grace.

God gives his grace to the humble. How will he give it to you if you're not humble? How will you be saved? Because by grace are you saved? If God doesn't give you grace, how will you get it? Dear brothers and sisters, when we come to the word of God, we have to be willing to love the truth and be willing to set aside traditions and concepts that we have absorbed through so many years from many denominations. I'm not saying you should accept CFC's teaching.

No, I'm saying you should accept what the Bible says. That was the problem the Pharisees had with Jesus. They said, Oh, this man's not teaching what Moses... They didn't even know what Moses taught.

Once when Jesus was walking with the two disciples to Emmaus, he took all the Old Testament. It says in Luke 24, and he explained to them from Genesis to Malachi, everything was teaching about Jesus. It says that in Luke 24.

But the Pharisees didn't understand that. It was all talking about Jesus. But when Jesus came, they called him Beelzebul, Prince of Devils.

That shows me how blind you can be in studying the Bible. You can be so blind that you can think that's not of God, that's of the devil. That's a false teaching.

That's what they said about Jesus. That's what they said about Paul. That's what the Roman Catholics said about Martin Luther.

That's what the Anglicans said about John Wesley. And that's what many Christians have said about every true prophet of God in his generation. Years after they die, the next generation will say, ah, he was a prophet.

But in his generation, he was called a heretic and a false teacher. This has been true in 2,000 years. Remember this.

The only way of salvation, my brother, sister, he who has ears, let him hear, is to come to the Bible and say, Lord, this is your word. I'm not going to listen to what others say. My mind has already been influenced by a lot of traditions I've absorbed, but I'm going to get rid of them.

I'm going to obey scripture. I did that 55 years ago. I grew up in an Orthodox church that prayed to Mary and prayed for the dead and all kinds of things, that had child baptism.

And I read the scriptures and I found that those things are not true. I made one decision that day, years ago, and I've never regretted it. I say, Lord, if I find anything in your Bible, in the word, which is against what I've understood and what Christians teach, I will obey your word and not what Christians teach.

That's been my salvation and that'll be your salvation too. I'm not asking you to accept what I say, but what the scripture says. So let's move on.

False prophets will come in sheep's clothing. They'll pretend to be sheep. They look like sheep.

The doctrine will sound right, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. And that's one way you can identify a false prophet. What does a wolf want when he puts on sheep's clothing? Tell me.

His whole aim is to get into the fold. What for? To bless the sheep? To bite, get something from the sheep. Ravenous wolves and a preacher who wants to get something from you, your money, or to exploit a

simple girl sexually or something.

A lot of preachers are doing this. Exploit them for their money or for some sexual satisfaction or for honor to get you to give them honor. That's a ravenous wolf.

He's not interested in your good. He's interested in what he can get out of you. Beware of a preacher and you've got to discern this.

Even if his doctrine is right, that means sheep's clothing. If you find his desire is to get something from you for himself, steer clear of him, give him a wide berth and walk away from that. It's my advice.

He was yours to hear. Let him hear. Ravenous wolves, you will know them by their fruits.

Thank God Jesus gave us a sign by which to identify false prophets, not by their gifts, by their fruit. Very important. Do you think Christians listen to this? They don't.

Jesus spoke about people who have gifts and people who have fruit in the same passage. I'll just come to it. Just hang on.

I'll show you how to identify a false prophet by fruit, not by the gifts of the spirit. Okay, I'll show you the gifts of the spirit later on. Here it is.

Go down to verse 22 and you see some of these false prophets. Who will come to Jesus in the final day and say, Lord, Lord, you know, we exercise the gift of prophecy in Jesus name. You know, we exercise the gift of casting out demons in Jesus name.

Do you know we exercise the gift of miracles in Jesus name? And I will declare to these people, great preachers who conducted big crusades and spoke on television and impressed multitudes of undiscerning Christians who gave them millions of rupees. I will say to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you who live in sin.

The only thing that will matter in that day, my brother, sister, is not whether you cast out demons or heal the sick or prophesied, but what was your attitude to sin? You did all these miracles. Great. I'm not saying you didn't do it.

Did you do it in my name? Yes, you did it in my name. But, you know, this paraphrase here that I have is beautiful. The Lord says to those people in that day, all that you did was to use me and my name to make yourself important.

We are the preachers like that. You use me and my name to make yourself important. That's all you did.

You don't impress me one bit. Get out of here. Do you believe those words of Jesus? How many preachers do you think will be there like that? One or two? No.

Jesus said many. Twenty-two. That means many thousands of preachers are false prophets.

You see, then how to identify them? Because they exercise gifts in Jesus' name. Jesus said it so clearly. Don't look for their gifts.

Look for the fruit in their life. Verse 16, you will know them by their fruits. And later on, as I showed you, not by their gifts.

You see the contrast between fruit and gift. It's not that gifts are not important. Jesus cast out demons.

Jesus prophesied. Jesus healed the sick. But there was a difference.

Jesus did miracles, but there was fruit backing it up. How much more important is fruit than gifts? Well, Jesus is our example. He spent three and a half years exercising the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and he spent 33 and a half years showing the fruit of the Spirit.

So you work out the mathematics of that. The fruit of the Spirit is 10 times more important than the gifts of the Spirit. That's how I worked it out.

So I say in my life, the fruit of the Spirit, it must be 10 times more than any gifts I have. God's given me gifts. I don't deny it.

I don't have it myself. I can preach. God's given me the ability to cast out demons.

Now and then we prayed for the sick and they've been healed. That's not the main thing. It's the character of Jesus is 10 times or a million times, me anyway, more important than gifts.

I'll tell you why, because Satan's got gifts, tremendous gifts. He was the first person who brought down fire from heaven in the Bible, not Elijah. In the book of Job chapter one, it says Satan sent fire down from heaven and consumed Job's property.

He has tremendous gifts. Look at all these people who do witchcraft in India. They do amazing things.

Yeah. Gifts is not the main thing. What does Satan lack? Character.

I'll tell you what Satan has, tremendous supernatural abilities and tremendous knowledge of the Bible. So if you're impressed by somebody with a tremendous knowledge of the Bible and the tremendous gifts, supernatural gifts, you, one day you'll be impressed by the devil himself, but you'll identify the devil by the fact that he doesn't have a Christ-like humility or purity or goodness. So please bear that in mind, dear brothers and sisters, look for the fruit.

Then you will not be deceived. Further, verse 17, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A tree's fruit manifests what type of tree it is.

What type of tree is this? You look at the fruit. It comes out of the tree. Have you seen a tree with gifts? I've seen it.

Christmas trees. They're not really a lot of gifts hanging there. And I tell you, some of them look more attractive and much more expensive than one mango.

Some of those trees, gifts hanging on those trees, but it's not part of the tree. I look a lot of, I look at a lot of preachers with gifts, just like a Christmas tree with all these gifts. It's not nature, but Jesus spoke about a tree with fruit that comes out of its nature, that must be, that is true Christianity.

That's the type of, the only type of preacher. I want to listen to because I know he can help me because it's, I can see that it's worked in his life. So dear brothers and sisters, we live in a world where multitudes of television preachers and people with great charisma, but not character, and who are like ravenous wolves out to get something from you, from men and women.

You've got to be careful of them. That's all I say. I can't protect you from them.

But I can warn you from them, just like Jesus did. Even Jesus won't protect a person who will not listen to his warning. That's why so many Christians go astray.

Jesus warns, but he's not going to catch a person by the neck and say, come on, don't go there, never, because he gives you freedom. He told Adam, don't go near that tree, but he didn't catch him by the neck and pull him away. Okay.

If you go to that tree, it's fine. You're warned against false prophets. You don't listen.

You say, oh, I'm okay. And you go there and you get led astray. God will allow you to go astray.

A good tree cannot produce bad fruit. Okay. The second, the, so there's two ways, two trees.

And the third illustration was three, two houses, verse 24. You know, we sing a song, the wise man built his house upon the rock and the foolish man built his house upon the sand and the rains came down and the floods came up in the house. And the foolish man's house fell down and the fall of that house was great.

And the wise man's house stood. And then do you know the last verse of that song? So build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ. That is not what Jesus said.

That's exactly what I'm trying to say, how you can sing and sing and sing and sing a song, and it is not according to scripture. You say, you mean Jesus is not the rock? Of course he's the rock. It says in one Corinthians three, there is no other foundation that anybody can lay than Jesus Christ.

But make sure how you build on it in that context is right. But here the wise man built his house on the rock. The foolish man built his house on the sand.

See what Jesus explains, what the rock is. Let's listen to it. He doesn't say the rock is me.

Like you're singing the song. There are many songs we sing. I want to tell you, which are not scriptural.

And I don't sing those verses. Whenever I come to such lines, I don't sing them because it would be telling a lie to God, which I don't believe. Many of us are not careful when we sing songs because we don't know the scriptures.

I could show you numerous songs that are sung, which are not according to scripture. Here's one of them. So build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's not how I sing it. So build your house on obedience to his word. See if that's not what he says here.

The foolish man, a wise man. He is one verse 26 who hears these words of mine. The foolish man is the one who hears these words of mine and does not act on them.

You see that? And the wise man is the man who hears these words of mine and verse 24 obeys them. That's the contrast. So the rock is verse 24, hearing his words and obeying it.

So it's not build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ, build your house on obedience to his word. I'm just telling you a little thing like this, which can save you from messing up your life to find out whether you're on

the rock or not. Have you ever wondered when some crisis comes in your life and you begin to shake and you begin to get anxious and worried, the rains and the floods are shaking you, brother.

Why is that? You're not founded on the rock. Why don't you take that warning? Another bigger storm may come another day and collapse your house altogether. That little warning that shook your house a little bit was a little warning for you to check your foundation before you have a bigger toss.

It's like the early days when I was riding a scooter and I'd have a little toss on the road and I said, Lord, what are you trying to teach me from that? And the Lord's telling me drive a little slowly and be more careful. So when you've got a little shaking in your life, some anxiety, tension, and you got all worried, the Lord's saying, check your foundation, get it right now because there are bigger storms coming in the future, bigger floods, heavier rains. And if you don't check your foundation now, in that day, your whole house will collapse.

Thank God for little warnings. He who hears these words of mine, particularly, that's why we emphasize the Sermon on the Mount, he who hears these words of mine, that's Matthew 5, 6, and 7, and obeys them, he can be compared to a wise man who built his house on a rock. And he who hears these words of mine, verse 26, in other words, this is not an atheist.

This is not a non-Christian. This is a Christian. Who are the ones who hear the words of Jesus? Fellow who comes to church.

Fellow who reads the Bible. Who hears these words of mine, and does not do them. Because he listened to some preacher who said, this is not for us.

Oh, it doesn't matter. You just received Christ in your heart, you're okay. It doesn't matter if you ignore all that Jesus said here.

That's why such Christians, their lives are always shaking, till one day their whole life collapses. I've seen people like this. They don't take warnings from the little shakings that come in their life.

And years later, they've gone completely away, doing all types of things which non-Christians would not do. And they're gone. Lost their salvation.

Because they wouldn't take heed to the little warnings. When there's a storm in your family life, what's the Lord trying to show? That must be important. That's why, what I'm going to say.

What's the Lord trying to show when there's a storm in your family life? My son, I love you. My daughter, I love you. Something is wrong in your life.

Take it seriously now, before your whole house collapses. Stop blaming your partner. Examine your own foundation.

That's what I would say. Take it seriously. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Let's go now to Matthew 5. Here's how the Sermon on the Mount begins. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. And you know, Jesus used illustrations, so here's an illustration.

Compare poor in spirit with poor in body. A beggar. We have lots of them in India.

Always waiting for a handout. Even if you give them, they'll be back again soon. You ask them, what about what I gave you earlier? That's finished, sir.

I need some more. That is poor in body. Poor in spirit is someone who comes to, not who comes to people like that.

Beggars go to human beings. We go to God. Say, God, I need your grace for today.

What about what I gave you yesterday? That's over, Lord. I need for today. Every day, I need to come to you.

I see a need in my own life. Have you ever heard a beggar coming, asking for some money for somebody else? No. They always ask for themselves.

I need money. When you go to God, don't talk about the need of other people. It's not your wife or your husband or your brother or sister who's standing in need of prayer.

It's you. Lord, I am in need. That's why we have stressed in this church for 39 years, that in the church of the living God, we judge ourselves first.

And those who judge other people first are not really a part of the church. They are a part of that other church of Satan, who's the accuser of the brethren. If you are the accuser of the brethren, that's the title of Satan, and you spend your life accusing others, that person's wrong, the other person's wrong, brother, you're in the wrong church.

You should be in the church of Satan. Believe it or not, you won't hear such straight words in other churches, because they don't want to offend you because they want your money. This is the truth.

In the church of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 4, 17, we judge ourselves first. It's the household of God, 1 Peter 4, 17, where we judge ourselves first. And Revelation 12, 10, it's the church of Satan, who's the accuser of the brethren.

Make sure you're in the right church. I am in need, Lord. That is poor in spirit.

That's the opening verse of the Sermon on the Mount, teaching us that when you read the Sermon on the Mount, don't think of somebody else, but think of yourself. In every verse, when it says, don't lust after women, think of yourself. When it says, don't get angry, that's equal to murder, think of yourself.

When it says, you must love your enemy and forgive everyone, it's not other people forgiving you, it's you forgiving others. So, poor in spirit is the beginning. This is the master key that opens every door in the kingdom of heaven.

The kingdom of heaven is like a palace with rooms with many treasures. There's one master key, poor in spirit, that will make you get the treasure in every room. It's by saying, Lord, I am in need.

Like that beggar, you come to God. I'll give you a verse for it. I like to show a verse for everything I teach.

Proverbs chapter 8. Proverbs chapter 8, the blessing of the Lord comes on whom? Yeah, verse 34, Proverbs 8, 34. This is the man who gets the blessing of the Lord, the grace of God, the power of God, the wisdom of God. This blessing comes to the man who listens to me, who watches daily at my gates like the

beggars come to your gates, waiting at my door posts like the beggars come to your door posts for he who finds me finds life and obtains favor.

And that's an Old Testament word for grace, grace from me, waits daily, Lord, I'm in need. Blessed are the poor in spirit, they will possess the whole kingdom of heaven. Meditate on that.

The second blessing, verse Matthew 5, verse 4, blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comfort, comforted, comforted. The word comfort has got the word F-O-R-T in the middle, which means strength, will be strengthened. That's how I look at it.

To be strengthened, you must mourn. What do you mourn for? For sin. We are not like little kids who mourn saying, oh, my knee got hurt, I fell down.

No. We mourn for our sin. I love that verse in that song, I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene.

One line of it always strikes me, ever since I heard it, maybe 30, 40 years ago, he had no tears for his own griefs, but sweat drops of blood for mine. He had no tears for his own griefs. And I say, Lord Jesus, I'm following you.

By the grace of God, I will never shed one tear for my own griefs, never in my life. I have no sorrows to complain to others about. I have no griefs to go and shed tears about.

I follow Jesus who had no tears for his own griefs, but many tears for the areas in my life where I am un-Christlike still. I have not become Christlike. I've got a long way to go.

And the closer I get to God, the more I realize there are little, little areas of un-Christlikeness that I never even realized or thought were un-Christlike one year ago or five years ago. It's a whole refining process where God shows me what his nature is like. You know, when you're in the kindergarten class, you don't learn about calculus and things like that.

You think you've learned all of mathematics when you know two plus two is four. And in the early days of the Christian life, we think, just because I accepted Christ and I've got a changed attitude towards drinking and smoking and gambling and things like that, I'm a Christian. That's good.

We start like that with the kindergarten. But as you move on in the Christian life, you discover many, many subtle areas of selfishness, subtle areas of arrogance and pride, which are there within you, which are unlike Christ. And you mourn.

I hope you do. I mourn. I mourn regularly, usually on my behalf, so that I don't disturb anybody else.

For what? No griefs of mine. Nobody does me any harm. Everything that people do for me works for my good, according to Romans 8.28. I don't weep for that.

But on Christ's likeness, mourn, they'll be strengthened. Blessed are the gentle, Matthew 5.5. Gentle means those who will not fight back, meek, will not fight back with people who want to fight with them. You must have a testimony that you cannot fight with me.

You cannot get into an argument with me. I'll allow you to win. Even though I know you're wrong.

I've had that type of wonderful experience with many people who try to convince me that my theology is wrong. And I can know their theology is wrong by the way they get angry. And I say, brother, I'm not going to argue with you.

God bless you. Let's pursue humility. End of argument.

A meek person will not fight. Be one like that. Reserve all your fighting for the devil.

We wrestle not with flesh and blood. That's a New Testament commandment, Ephesians 6. The more you avoid wrestling with flesh and blood, the more you'll be able to fight the devil. Next, verse 6. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, they shall be satisfied.

If you're not satisfied with the measure of righteousness that should be in your life today, I'll tell you clearly the reason. You don't hunger and thirst. Because every person who hungers and thirsts for righteousness to be holy and pure in his life will be satisfied.

Are you trying to tell me God didn't keep his promise? Or is it that you did not hunger and thirst? I say, Lord, I didn't hunger and thirst. Because I remember the days when I was a terrible backslider 40 years ago, 1974. I didn't hunger and thirst for righteousness.

That's why I was defeated in my inner life and thought life. I could be a hypocrite. But when I got fed up of that, Lord, I said, Lord, I don't want to be a hypocrite.

I never want to preach in my life if I can't preach what I practice in my life. I hunger and thirst, and God met with me. I can tell you, every one of you, I'm not a favorite of God.

You are as much a favorite of God as I am. But if you fulfill the condition, he'll do it in your life too. Hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Not ask in a meek way, Lord, please give me some righteousness. Hunger and thirst for it. Those who seek me with all their heart will find me, says the Lord.

Don't seek for God like you would seek for a lost 50 paisa coin somewhere. Seek for God like if you have misplaced 500,000 rupees somewhere in your house or somewhere where we went out some shop, you accidentally left it behind. How would you seek for it? You wouldn't casually look for it like you look for a 50 paisa coin you lost somewhere.

That's exactly how some people seek for God. Yeah, Lord, please do something for me, nothing happens, oh, I've got more important things to do. Well, you'll never be satisfied.

I can honestly say before God, without telling any lies, I'm perfectly satisfied with Jesus Christ. And with the measure of righteousness he's brought in me, I'm satisfied. But at the same time, I mourn because there's more I want.

It's a continuing dissatisfied satisfaction. Satisfaction with what God has already done, but dissatisfied because I want to get a Ph.D. spiritually. That should be our position.

Next, blessed are the merciful, verse 7, for they shall receive mercy. It's very, very important. When you pursue righteousness, verse 6, the great danger is being unmerciful.

Very great danger. Because the more you holy you become, the more you become judgmental on other people who are not as holy as you are. That's why Jesus immediately spoke about mercy.

Be merciful to others. Forgive them. Assume that they don't have the light that you have.

That's why they behave like that. Husbands and wives, why do you judge each other? Because you think, you should have the light I have. What stupidity.

It's like an older brother telling his 6-year-old younger brother, I'm in the 10th standard. Why can't you understand calculus like I understand? Who's the stupid person there, the 10-year-old? If God has given you more light, it should make you more humble. Always assume, this is what saved me from judging people, that the other person has not yet come to the light that God has given you.

That doesn't make you proud, because there may be other areas where that person has got more light than you. Yeah. You may be better than him in mathematics, but he may be better than you in science.

That's it. So you don't despise anyone, but don't look down on someone saying that you should have the light I have. No.

Be merciful. Be merciful. Whenever there's a conflict between a desire to judge a person or be merciful to a person, James 2.13 says, let mercy triumph over judgment.

There's a battle often in our heart. Mercy says, be merciful, and judgment says, no, let mercy triumph over judgment. Let mercy get the victory every single time.

The next one, be blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. There are people who see Jesus very clearly in their heart. The purer you are, the more clearly you'll see Jesus in your heart.

You don't have to see him physically. You'll see him more clearly in your heart. Jesus said that to Thomas in John 20, you're blessed because you've seen me.

More blessed, more blessed are those who have not seen me and believe because they saw me in their heart. I learned something from that, that I can see Jesus physically and walk away from him and not follow him, like many people who saw him in Israel. But if I see Jesus in my heart, it's more blessed because I can follow him in all situations.

Do you know it's more blessed to see Jesus in your heart than to see him physically? It really is, because Jesus said that in John chapter 20. So the pure in heart will see God. And there's another thing I see in this verse, Matthew 5, 8, and that is, when you're pure in your heart, you see God everywhere.

You don't see that enemy of yours. You see God doing that. You remember what David said when Shimei cursed him.

It's like in Samuel chapter 16. God has allowed Shimei to curse me. Why should I fight with him? God has allowed that fellow to come and fight with me.

I'm not going to fight with him. God has allowed that fellow to call me the devil. God bless him.

When you see God everywhere, in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus saw the Father. The Father has given me a cup to drink. Of course, it came through the postman, Judas Iscariot.

That's okay. I'm not worried about the postman. The cup came from my Father.

Supposing you're in love with somebody and your beloved sends you a letter, and it's an ugly looking postman who brought the letter. You don't reject the letter because the postman looked ugly. That's how Jesus was.

It doesn't matter. Judas Iscariot brought the cup. It was sent by my Father.

I'll drink it. But Peter couldn't see that. His heart was not pure.

He couldn't see God. That's why he took out his sword and fought. I tell you, every time you fight, the problem is your heart is not pure.

You don't see God there. You take out your sword, usually your tongue, and hit back. Because you can't see God.

You're just like Peter. Jesus saw God. Blessed are the pure in heart, they'll see God everywhere.

They'll see God in a shimmy eye cursing them. They'll see God in a Judas Iscariot betraying them. They'll see God everywhere.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. Do you want to be called the son of God? Here's the way. Be a peacemaker.

Or like it says here in the paraphrase, show people how to cooperate instead of how to compete and fight. Then you will discover your place in God's family. Show people how to cooperate instead of compete and fight.

Then you'll discover your place in God's family. Then you're really a son of God, a peacemaker. What are you known as in your home? A troublemaker or a peacemaker? What are you known in your neighborhood for? Troublemaker or peacemaker? What are you known in your office for? Troublemaker or peacemaker? When everybody else has got road rage.

You know what road rage is? When somebody does not obey the rules of the road in front of you. Are you a troublemaker or a peacemaker? Those are the places where you discover the narrow way that leads to life. Very few find it.

But you can find it if you want to. This is what God gives us grace for. Otherwise we can never make it.

And then number eight. Those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness. The kingdom of heaven is theirs.

Jesus taught us very clearly that when you stand up for righteousness and you proclaim righteousness, you will not be praised. You will not get the Nobel Prize. You will not get the Bharat Ratna.

You will be persecuted. Because this world is in opposition to God. Jesus Christ does not become popular.

If he came into the world today, they'd kill him even today. And the true servants of Jesus Christ will be opposed. Not honored by the world.

Please remember that. Don't get excited when worldly people honor you. Maybe for something you did in your office, okay.

But if not for your... True Christianity is always opposed. Because the world is against God. They'll love you if you care for the orphans and the widows.

But you proclaim the way of the cross. So that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. That's not going to be popular.

No. And finally, the last of the Beatitudes. Verse 11.

Blessed are you when people insult you. Persecute you. Falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

These two are combined. One is in verse 10 for the sake of righteousness. Because you stood up for what is right and holy.

But the second is because you stood up for the name of Jesus. That you said Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. People call you narrow-minded.

I always tell people truth is narrow-minded. 2 plus 2 is not 5. 2 plus 2 is not 3. I'm sorry. 2 plus 2 is 4. It's not even 4.1. Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven.

There is no other way. Whatever you may say. I'm not going to compromise there.

And you're insulted because you stand up for me. What should you do in that day? Don't go and weep. Go and jump for joy.

Rejoice and be glad. Because you're in line with the prophets of old. The prophets of old were all persecuted like that.

Dear brothers and sisters, That's just the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. You can read through it. Build your house on the rock.

Let's bow in prayer. Heavenly Father, We want to really talk to you right now. We don't want to go through a formality of a closing prayer.

But really talk to you, Dad. We are in need. Many of us here are in desperate need to take your word seriously.

We pray that your Holy Spirit will impress the seriousness of what we have heard today. Whatever you have spoken, Lord, limited by my words, whatever you spoke, I pray that it will go home to every heart and bring some eternal result. Only you can do it by your Spirit.

I pray that you'll do it. In Jesus' name, amen.

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