

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 3

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of teaching and obeying all of Jesus' commands as part of the Great Commission to truly live as disciples.

Duration: 25:34

Scripture: Matthew 28:18

Topics: "Great Commission", "Obedience To God"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of fulfilling the Great Commission by teaching and obeying all that Jesus commanded, including both major and minor commandments. It highlights the significance of living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, not just by physical sustenance, to truly live spiritually. The speaker stresses the need for Christians to prioritize obedience to all of Jesus' teachings, not neglecting any, and to be like soldiers who obey instantly without questioning.

Transcript

We continue our study today on all that Jesus taught. We were looking at the second half of the Great Commission, the first one being Mark 16, 15, going to all the world and preach the gospel to all creatures. The second half, Matthew 28, verse 18 to 20, to go and make them into disciples and baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We looked at this in the last two studies. And then he went on to say in verse 20, teaching them to do all that I commanded you. This is part of the Great Commission, that once we go into all the world and tell people that they are sinners, Christ died for their sins and rose up from the dead and ascended to heaven and is returning.

And he is the only way to the Father. And where we find people responding to that, we invite them to make Jesus Lord of their life, to be disciples who are going to follow Christ all their life, baptize them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, introduce them to the mystery of the Godhead. And it doesn't finish there.

That's like coming to the starting line of the Olympic marathon race. I mean, even that is a great feat. If you got selected to represent your country and you come to the starting line of the Olympic marathon race, that itself is a feat.

But it doesn't mean anything, because that's just the beginning of the race. So the fact that you become a disciple, you've been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that's great. But then begins the race.

And in that race, we are to be taught to do every single thing that Jesus commanded us. And this is going to take a lifetime. And this is what every church should be doing.

If a church is majoring on making disciples and baptism, it should not stop there. What should they be teaching every Sunday in their church services? Every single thing that Jesus taught, all that Jesus taught, not just a few selected things and certainly not psychology. It's sad when a church is more interested in improving its music than improving the quality of its members.

That's extremely sad. What do you think God in heaven would be more interested in? Here's a new church, for example, that's gathered together. Let's say people who are really born again and who really want to make Jesus Lord of their life.

And if you find that church is concentrating on music, do you think God's interested in that primarily? It's good to have good music. I'm not against that. But it's a question of priority.

What is God more interested in? The quality of those people in that church becoming more Christ-like or the music becoming more entertaining. And there you see how Christians have drifted away. Christian leaders haven't understood.

What are we supposed to do? We're to teach people to obey every single thing that Jesus commanded. And we cannot teach them that, how to do that, if we haven't done that ourselves. Notice the difference between supposing Matthew 28 verse 20 had read like this, teach them all that I commanded you.

And here it says, teach them to do all that I commanded you. What would the difference be? Teach them all that I commanded you. Teach them to do all that I commanded you.

I see the difference like this. Teach them all that I commanded you means I take all the teachings of Jesus and teach them just like a man teaches chemistry or physics or history. He studied it and he teaches it.

But teach them to do would mean that I've done it myself first so that I can teach them how they can also do it. If I haven't done it, I would be like a person teaching swimming when I don't know how to swim myself. And you know, if you've understood the principles and techniques of swimming, you can explain it clearly on a blackboard to a whole lot of people and not be a swimmer yourself.

That's teaching them. Teaching them to do is showing them in the swimming pool or in a river how you can actually go on the surface of the water and move from place to place. So a Christian leader has this responsibility to teach people to actually do every single thing that Jesus commanded and that is a huge area and that's what we want to try and study to fulfill that command.

All that I'm seeking to do in this program is to fulfill that command of Jesus. To teach all that Jesus taught. To teach you to do it as I've sought to do it myself in the last 52 years of my life.

Not just picking out the things which are my favorite commands or the ones that are easy and neglecting the others. Do you know that some commands of Jesus are more important than other commands? Some commands in scripture are more important than others. Even in the Old Testament law, there were many

commandments that God gave in the Old Testament.

We know the major 10 commandments, but there were 603 other commandments. The total was 613 commandments. Many do's and many don'ts and some of those commands were not as important as the 10 commandments and Jesus emphasized that and mentioned that in Matthew chapter 5 when he speaks about the least of these commandments in Matthew 5 and verse 19.

He uses the expression the least of these commandments. So in other words in Jesus' understanding all commands, commandments did not have equal importance. There was an order of priority.

Some things were more important than others. There were certain commands like certain types of food they were not supposed to eat in Leviticus 11. They were not as important as not committing murder and not committing adultery, but they were still commandments and that's what made Daniel a man whom God accepted because he decided to keep those least commandments in the Old Testament.

You remember in Daniel chapter 1 and verse 8 it says he determined in his heart not to defile himself with the king's food. Perhaps there was some pork on that table or some type of bird that God had forbidden in Leviticus 11. Now Daniel may not have been able to give all the explanation for the reasons why God had forbidden those things, but he decided if that is part of the law of Moses, even if it's not part of the 10 commandments, I'll keep it and it's written there that he wouldn't defile himself.

God honored him for that and made him a mighty witness in Babylon because God saw there a man who was willing to keep all his commandments. This is how it has always been through the ages. God has looked for those who will keep his commandments, who will do all that Jesus taught, not just pick and choose what they like.

In Matthew 5 19 he says Jesus said whoever cancels or annuls one of the least of these commandments and teaches others also shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus doesn't say he'll go to hell, but he will be the least in terms of heaven's recognition and values. Now to be least on the earth is absolutely unimportant, it doesn't matter, but to be least in the kingdom of heaven means that God Almighty doesn't think much of you.

I don't want to be in that category. I don't care if the world doesn't think much of me, but I certainly want God to think of much of me. It is said about John the Baptist, angel Gabriel told his father Zachariah, your son John will be great in the sight of the Lord.

That's certainly something worth coveting, to be great in the sight of the Lord. To be least in the sight of the Lord, to be one whom the Lord doesn't think much of, I don't want to be in that category. And yet it says here there are going to be some people who are least in the kingdom of heaven, not because they don't keep the major commandments, but because they ignore the minor ones.

And I find that attitude among many Christians even today. They say they are New Testament Christians, but they take some minor New Testament commands and say that's not important. You don't have to obey that.

I'm not questioning their faith in Christ. I'm not here to judge whether they go to heaven or hell, that's not my business. God is a judge of that.

But I certainly say, I believe what Jesus said, that if one cancels the least commandment of all that Jesus taught, and all that Jesus taught through his Holy Spirit, through the apostles in the epistles, then he will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. And in contrast to that, who's the one who's going to be great in the kingdom of heaven? The one who keeps the least commandment and teaches people to keep the least commandment. Matthew 5.19 could not be clearer.

It's very, very clear. Your attitude, let me say my friend, your attitude to the smallest commandments in the New Testament is what shows where you stand before God in his kingdom. Your attitude to obedience.

Jesus said, if you love me, keep my commandments. That's a mark of our love. Nobody can say, I love Jesus and ignore his commandments.

So if you ignore the least of the commandments of Jesus, in that measure, you don't love him. Maybe you do keep the big ones, but it's that your attitude to the least of them that determines your position in God's kingdom. This is so clear.

So when we speak about all that Jesus taught, now let me add one more word of clarification here. There are some people who say, well, what Jesus said in the gospels, that's more important than what is written in the epistles, which could be Paul's opinion or Peter's opinion or James' opinion. Well, if it is Paul's opinion, Peter's opinion, and James' opinion, then I can throw that in the trash can.

I wouldn't even have it in my Bible. I'd cut out those pages and throw it in the trash can and say, why do I want to know what Peter thought about something? Why do I want to know Paul's opinion? I mean, I may have some value for it, but I wouldn't call it the word of God. Oh, certainly not.

I mean, a godly man's opinion may be important, but you can't say it's the word of God. How in the world can I say something is the word of God written in the Bible if it is just somebody's opinion? Do you know that Jesus said before he went to the cross, at the Last Supper, he said to his disciples in John chapter 16 and verse 12, this is a very important verse for us to understand. John 16 verse 12, he said, I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now, or you cannot understand them now, you can't grasp the importance of them now, but when the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth has come, he will guide you into all that truth.

Paraphrasing his words, what he's saying is there are a lot of things I want to share with you, my dear apostles, disciples, but you won't be able to understand it. I want to tell you about all that's involved in new covenant life. I want to share with you all that's involved in having the fruit of the Spirit, partaking of the divine nature.

I want to share with you what it means to have the gifts of the Holy Spirit to serve me. I want to explain to you what divine love is, different from human love, which is what you have right now. I want to explain to you what it means to build the church as the body of Christ.

I want to explain to you how to build local churches, and how those local churches are to be administered, etc. And about my second coming, and the things that will happen before I return to this earth, etc., etc., etc. How the real meaning of grace, and how sin will not be able to rule over you when you're under grace.

Many things like that, which if I tell you now, you won't be able to understand it, because you don't have the Holy Spirit. Jesus knew it all. He could have shared a lot of things.

It's like trying to explain calculus to a student in the third standard. What will he know about calculus? It'll just go over his head. He's got to wait six or seven years before he can understand calculus.

And so, it's somewhat similar here. The Lord's saying, until the Holy Spirit comes into you, if I explain all these things, it's a waste of time. It's a waste of time conducting a teaching on differential calculus to seven-year-old students.

They have to grow up in the same way. When the Holy Spirit came, he said, when the Spirit of truth has come, he will lead you into all the truth. So, there are a lot of commandments in the epistles.

That's the fulfillment of John 16, verse 12 and 13. It is Jesus himself speaking in Paul's letter to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Corinthians, in the letters of Peter, James, the three episodes of John, book of Revelation. This is Jesus speaking the things that he could not speak when he was on earth, because they wouldn't have understood it.

So, in one sense, we can say all that Jesus taught includes a lot of things in the episodes. Those are the things that he wanted to teach when he was on earth, but because of the limitation in the apostles, he could not. But once that limitation was removed, when they received the Holy Spirit, then he could teach them through Paul, Peter, James, and the other apostles.

And so, if you take all of these things, and then you go back to that verse, he who cancels one of the least of these commandments in the New Testament, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. And I could tell you a number of commandments in the New Testament epistles, which many Christians and Christian leaders ignore. They say, that was for that time.

It's not for us today. That was a cultural thing, only for those people in Corinth, not for us today. See, once you take that attitude to any commandment in the New Testament, however small it may be, you will then, you have to give freedom then to another person to say, well, same-sex marriage, that was, is not forbidden.

In that time, they had to marry opposite sexes, but now it doesn't matter. That was, marrying man and woman marriage, it was only for that time. How can you prevent that person from saying that, if you have changed some commandment in the New Testament, saying that was only for that time? Homosexuality, people can say, that's not wrong.

In those days, 2,000 years ago, yes, it was wrong, but not today. It was for that culture. Do you see the foolish position that many Christian leaders take, when they take one commandment out of the New Testament and say, that was for that time? It applies to anything.

Whoever cancels the least of Jesus' commandments, he will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. He won't go to hell, but he'll certainly be called the least in the kingdom of heaven, totally unfit to be a servant of God. So, Jesus said in the Great Commission, teach them to observe all, and all includes the big commandments, the small commandments, every single commandment, all that I teach them to do, all that I commanded you.

When we look at the commandments, whether they are big or small, the important thing is, who commanded it? In the military, people are taught to obey a simple command like right turn or left turn on the parade ground, as important as go to the battlefield, report for duty at such and such a place. One may be a more major commandment than the other. Both are equally important.

Instant obedience is the mark of any military officer or soldier, and that's the type of person that the Lord wants in his church. Teach them to do all that I commanded you. I found that people are more careful to obey commands in the military than in the church.

The church calls itself the Lord's Army, but it doesn't behave like, they don't behave like soldiers, most of them. Soldiers are taught from the day they join as recruits to obey instantly everything, and not to reason out whether they can understand the reason for that command or the meaning of that command. Have we fulfilled this part of the Great Commission, to teach people to all that Jesus commanded? I find that very few people have taken this matter seriously.

Let's look at where Jesus began, some of the things that Jesus spoke about. In Matthew chapter 4, we read in verse 4, the very first sentence that Jesus spoke that's recorded in scripture after his being anointed by the Holy Spirit at the baptism. He was anointed, the Holy Spirit is baptized in Matthew 3 verse 16, and then in the wilderness temptation, at the end of those 40 days, we read these are the first words that come out of Jesus' mouth in response to the first temptation.

The first temptation was from the devil, if you're the son of God, command these stones to become bread. Matthew 4 verse 3, and here's we can say the very first thing that Jesus taught. What is it? The very first thing that Jesus taught, man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Now that's a huge subject that we need to think about a lot more than just in this brief time, but I want to introduce that at this time. How shall man live? He doesn't say bread is not necessary, Jesus is very realistic. He says bread is necessary, we need food in order to live, but he's saying it's not food alone, and he's also saying thereby that food is not primary.

What is primary is every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. What is every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God? Everything that God has said, his commandments, his promises, these are the words that we find in scripture. Every word is the way basis on which I can live, really live.

If I'm only thinking of existing, then I need only food, but if I want to live spiritually the way God wants me to live, then I need every word of God, and that for us has been revealed to us primarily in the scriptures in the Bible, and that's why I say that a person who's more interested in food than in studying the Bible has not really understood how God wants man to live. Listen to it again, the very first words that Jesus spoke, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, and that is why God has given us his word so that we can know how we are to live, and if you're a true disciple of Jesus Christ, you'll have a tremendous passion to know every word of God, every promise, and every commandment, because that's the only way we can live, that we can really live, and that's why it's important to understand all that Jesus taught if we want to understand how we are to live, otherwise we only exist. Do you know the difference between existing and living? Every single word of God, and it's not something that we just read, it says here that proceeds out of the mouth of God, God is constantly speaking, I can read the same scripture for the 50th time and hear something fresh that proceeds from the mouth of God in that verse.

It's a wonderful thing, God's word in the Bible. So I want to say to you dear brothers and sisters and my friends, we cannot fulfill the Great Commission really, if we don't seek to hear all that Jesus spoke and taught, the promises he gave us, and the commands that he gave us. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Our Heavenly Father, help us to realize what a treasure we have in the word of God that you've given us, to value it, and to seek to live by it, by its promises and its commandments, so that we can truly live. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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