

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 53

by Zac Poonen

Faith based on God's word is the key to overcoming the law of sin and death, and we must be willing to stand against human tradition for the sake of God's word.

Duration: 25:37

Scripture: Matthew 14:30, Matthew 15:3

Topics: "Faith And Tradition", "Following Jesus"

Description

This sermon delves into the teachings of Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels, emphasizing the importance of faith, overcoming human traditions that contradict God's word, and the significance of what comes from the heart rather than external rituals. It highlights the need to call on the Lord for help when facing challenges, the danger of following blind leaders who prioritize tradition over God's commands, and the consequences of prioritizing man-made traditions over the word of God.

Transcript

We continue our study now in all that Jesus taught by his life and by his words. And we are studying through the Gospels. God has given us four Gospels to tell us what Jesus taught in words and by his actions.

His actions also convey a message. The way he did things, the principles by which he lived and how he related to other people. And we were considering last, in our last episode, of how Jesus walked on the water overcoming the law of gravity.

And the greater miracle there was Peter overcoming the law of gravity as he looked at Jesus. And he thereby demonstrated to us how we could overcome the law of sin and death. Which is, the law of gravity is a picture of that, always pulling us down and we can overcome.

And Peter overcoming the law of gravity is the greater miracle there, teaching us that we can overcome the law of sin and death. And when he began to sink, he just cried out, Lord save me. That's all you got to do when you have failed, when you're slipping.

The important thing is to call on the Lord, as it says here in Luke, Matthew 14, 30. When you're beginning to sink, not after you've hit rock bottom, the bottom of the sea. So many people ask God to help them and be merciful to them after they have completely fallen and messed up their life.

The time to ask God to help you is when you're beginning to sink. For example, in practical terms, that means when you're facing a particular pressure to anger or to watch internet pornography on a computer. Or any type of pressure like that, and you find you're resisting it, resisting it, but you find you're slipping.

You're falling, you feel the pull is becoming greater and greater. And you fear that you may fall, that's the time to cry out, Lord give me grace, Lord save me. The words are not important, if the Lord hears the cry of your heart, whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be delivered.

That's the promise in scripture, whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be delivered. And as soon as Peter called on the name of the Lord saying, Lord save me, before the Lord gave him a rebuke, he first held him. That's always God's way.

He'll correct you, he'll rebuke you for your unbelief, but he'll first hold you and then correct you. He held him and then said to him, he didn't say to him and then hold him because by the time the Lord said those words, Peter would have gone right into the sea. So he held him and then said, oh you of little faith, why did you doubt? We've seen this again and again and again in the Gospel of Matthew.

The Lord rebuking people for unbelief, the Lord admiring faith. What is the overall message that comes to us through this? What is Jesus trying to teach us through all these incidents put together? That the thing that he appreciates greatly in us is faith. That faith based on his word.

Now if the Lord had not told him to come and he stepped out, that would be a different thing altogether. Now unfortunately today a lot of people are doing things which the Lord has never told them to do. They're trying to have faith for things God never promised.

And no wonder they're sinking, they make a mess of their life. Because they are trying to do things God never told them to do. They're jumping off the roof of the temple and trying to claim a promise and they go crashing down and break their bones.

And wonder why the Lord didn't protect them. Well the Lord's not promised to support our stupidity. Jesus, if there are steps provided from the roof of the temple, you should use the steps.

Not jump off and ask the Lord to protect you with trying to claim some promise of his. So here we read that if we have faith based on some promise of God or some command of God saying come and do this. You can be 100% sure that God will give you the resources to do it.

Whatever he has commanded, he gives us the resources to do. There's a lovely expression in Acts chapter 20 for describing the word of God. In Acts chapter 20, Paul uses this expression to refer to God's word.

Acts 20 verse 32, he says, I commend you to God and to the word of his grace. That's a lovely expression for the word of God. It's the word of his grace.

Which means that every command in this word will have the promise of grace attached to it. That means that if you find a command, you can expect grace is available to keep that command. There is no command in the New Testament for which grace is not available.

Rejoice in the Lord always is a command. There's grace available. To rejoice in the Lord 24-7.

You may not have availed of it, that's another thing. Or be anxious for nothing, there's grace available for that. To live a life completely free from anxiety.

That may not be your experience because you don't avail of it. You don't cry Lord save me. You don't believe that the Lord can do it.

You look at the circumstances, look here, look there like Peter looked around at people and circumstances and you drown in anxiety or you drown in fear or you drown in grumbling and complaining. When there's absolutely no need to. There's no need to live on this earth with having a bad mood one single time in your life.

Can you have a bad mood and rejoice in the Lord always? That's impossible. Can you be gloomy and depressed and rejoice in the Lord always? Can you be anxious and fearful and obey the command which says be anxious for nothing? No. What is the secret? The secret is to look at Jesus and see how he lived.

And obey his command and trust him to give us the grace to live by that standard. And this is what Christendom needs to be challenged to do. This is the message that's missing in Christendom today.

Matthew 14 and verse 32. When they got into the boat the wind stopped and those who were in the boat worshipped him saying you're certainly God's son. And they crossed over to Gennesaret and there the men of their place recognized him and they brought to him all who were sick.

And they began to entreat him that they might just touch the fringe of his cloak. They didn't even touch his body. They just touched the dress he was wearing.

And there was so much power that was transmitted through his body through the dress. As many as touched it were cured. In other words every single person was cured.

They were all healed. The blind touched you know all types of terrible diseases. Just touched blind people's eyes were opened by touching the hem of his garment.

Deaf people began to hear and dumb began to speak and lame people touched the hem of his garment and they began to walk. And those with internal diseases and aches and all types of things touched the hem of his garment and they were healed. This was an attestation by God as I've said repeatedly of the fact that Jesus was the Messiah.

It is not something that we can repeat. And it's not something that's happened throughout two thousand years of Christianity. It happened in the time of Jesus.

God has occasionally given such supernatural powers to some people according to his sovereign choice. But not nobody even one percent of the extent to which it was seen in Christ has never been an apostle or servant of God who's been able to manifest the power of healing and miracles that flowed out from Christ's life and body. Even one percent not even one thousandth of that.

So we need to humble ourselves and acknowledge that we cannot do that. He never asked us to do it. He never asked us to follow him in his ministry.

He asked us to follow him in his life in the way he lived. So let's keep that in mind. And then we go on to Matthew chapter 15.

We see that some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem. And they were always trying to find fault with him and his disciples. You know there are some Christians like that.

They're great scholars Bible scholars like the Pharisees. You ask yourself whether you're one like that. But whenever you look at somebody you disagree with.

See the Jesus was one whom the Pharisees disagreed with. They didn't quite agree with the way he was doing things and the things he was preaching. So when you find someone whom you disagree with someone you hear or someone you meet.

Ask yourself whether you're acting like the Pharisees acted towards Jesus. You know trying to find some fault some little thing that you can nitpick and find wrong or an error or some little sentence he said or word he used. And very often you'll find it's activated by jealousy.

The Pharisees were tremendously jealous of Jesus because he was so popular. And you could be jealous of someone whose ministry is more effective than yours more anointed than yours more people are listening to him than you. And you want to do something to tear him down.

There are lots of Pharisees like that in the world today. And the Lord would say to you you generation of vipers how will you escape the damnation of hell. You've got to take that seriously.

These things are written for our instruction. What we learn from here is not only from Jesus life we can learn from the reaction of other people to Jesus ministry. Many things for our own salvation if you are interested.

And so they came to Jesus and said why do you disciples transgress the tradition of the elders. The tradition of the elders was what was most important for the Pharisees not the word of God. Not the heart of God not the spirit of God but the tradition of the elders.

And I find with so many Christians this is the problem. The tradition of the elders what we have believed in our church from ancient ages in some churches and or say our church started a hundred years ago. And this is what our senior elders have taught.

This is what we believe the tradition of the elders. But is it found in the word of God. That is the question.

So it's because Jesus broke with tradition. He said the word of God is more important than tradition. That's why they killed him.

They didn't kill Jesus because he was washing the disciples feet. They didn't kill him because he said love your enemies. They didn't kill him because he said don't lust after women.

They killed him because he said the tradition of the elders which violates and contradicts the word of God is a lot of rubbish. And you got to throw it away. You got to understand the spirit of God's word.

So the tradition of the elders this phrase is a very important thing the Pharisees and today's Pharisees also. You can find in your own heart if you respect human tradition without scriptural foundation. Where particularly where it contradicts the scripture.

Now there are a lot of traditions which have nothing to do with scripture by all means you can follow them. But traditions which contradict scripture we must throw into the trash can. The garbage bin.

A lot of things in Christendom today that need to be thrown into the trash can if you want to follow the Lord. If you don't do that you will not be able to follow Jesus. You'll be following the tradition of the elders.

And one day stand before the Lord and discover that you didn't obey God's word. You just obeyed the traditions of your church. So be careful that that doesn't happen.

And the one tradition here was they don't sit down to eat without first going through a ritual washing of their hands. But the disciples were pretty careless about all that and Jesus answered and said to them. Why do you yourself transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? He says I'll tell you other areas where you are breaking God's word with your traditions.

This is a small thing that they don't wash their hands ritualistically. They were not talking about hygiene there. But they were talking about a ritualistic washing of the hands in a certain way for a period of time before they eat.

I mean if one washes hands for the sake of hygiene that's at least one thing. But here it was a ritual, a religious ritual which they were wondering why the disciples didn't go through. And he said that's not a serious thing.

I'll tell you the word of God that you cancel with your tradition. For example he said what did Jesus teach? God has said Matthew 15 for honor your father and mother and he who speaks evil of father and mother should be put to death. You know how seriously God takes this matter of speaking disrespectfully to your parents or about your parents.

Speaking evil of father and mother. It's not so much saying that my father worships idols. Maybe he does.

That's the truth. That's not speaking evil. That's a fact.

But when you denounce him by criticizing him in a bad way that's speaking evil. That's a very serious sin in God's eyes. He says but you say to children who need to be supporting their parents financially.

Anything of mine that I could have sent you to help you. I'm sorry I've given it to God. Wow what a spiritual answer to give.

Your dad is in need. They have hardly enough to eat. And you're earning a good salary.

And you don't send to help him. Because you say you've given it to God. That is religious garbage.

The Lord said he's not honoring his father and mother there. You teach him not to honor his father and mother. There you invalidate or cancel the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

You're so greedy to get that guy's money. That you don't even allow him to support his parents. And that's happening today.

There are so many churches who are greedy for people's money. That they don't allow them to use it for legitimate needs in their family. That's not the way we do it in our church.

We tell people if you've got legitimate needs in your family. God's not a greedy person asking you not to meet those needs. But to give it to him or his work.

No. Take care of your needs. Clear your debts.

Help your children to get a good education. And give to God cheerfully as much as you can give. That is the New Testament teaching.

Not forcing people to give 10%. That's a tradition. A tradition of men carried over from the old covenant.

And it's amazing. I was wondering. We wonder why people take just one commandment from the old covenant.

About keep paying your tithes. What about other commandments like keeping the Sabbath. Not doing any work.

Not lighting a fire on Saturdays. And other commandments like killing a lamb or a goat every time you sin. It's all being fulfilled in Christ.

They say the lamb and the goat being slain is fulfilled in Christ. So has the Sabbath been. So has the tithing been.

It's all fulfilled in Christ. The law is over. The old covenant has been abolished.

Hebrews chapter 8. We're not supposed to tithe today. You mean we're not supposed to give to God you say. Yes.

You can give cheerfully. Whatever you give cheerfully. Is what it says in 2nd Corinthians 9 and verse 7. In the Old Testament the important thing was how much you gave.

10% like income tax. It's a fixed rate. Income tax rate is fixed.

They were paying income tax to God. But in the New Covenant our relationship with God is not like a servant to his master paying income tax. It's like a wife to her husband.

A wife doesn't pay income tax to her husband. She loves her husband and says anything I have you can have. It's a bride to a bridegroom relationship.

Do you want to go back to the old servant master relationship with God paying income tax to him. Then forget about this tithing. And say Lord I have a relationship with you where all that I have is yours.

Tell me how much I can use for myself. Can you imagine a husband allowing his wife to starve because he wants her money. That would be an evil husband.

God's not like that. Christ is not like that. So here we see an example of human traditions that have cancelled out God's clear word in 2nd Corinthians 9 and 7. It says God loves a cheerful giver and you must not give grudgingly.

You must not give out a compulsion somebody forcing you to give. That has been cancelled out by greedy preachers and pastors. But who is there to proclaim it.

If anybody proclaims it pastors and preachers will jump on him saying he's a heretic. And if you're afraid of that you'll never be a servant of God. That's it.

That is the modern day application of it. You know you say you've given it to God and you don't help your own family. Jesus said you have actually cancelled out the word of God.

He who does not care for his own family 1 Timothy 5 verse 8. Who does not provide for his own family is worse than an infidel. Worse than an unbeliever. Worse than an atheist.

We need to know these verses of scripture which a lot of your pastors won't tell you. He says you hypocrites rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you saying in Matthew 15 and verse 8. This people honors me with their lips. They say a lot of nice things about me.

But they don't know the scriptures. They don't know what my word says. And so their heart is far away from me.

In vain do they worship me. They say they're coming on Sunday morning for praise and worship. What do they do after that? They teach as doctrines the commandments of men.

What men teach them. What some preacher teaches them from the pulpit which is not even found in the New Testament. That's what they practice.

That's so true today. You know we got to apply these scriptures to our lives today and see all that Jesus taught. He taught us to give up human tradition which cancels the word of God.

There are a lot of traditions as I said which have got no conflict with God's word. That's fine. But wherever a single tradition conflicts the word of God.

We must be willing to stand against relatives, church leaders, anybody to say I'm not going to do that. Because there's a higher authority than you. Higher authority than you my dad and mom.

Higher authority than you pastor, preacher, bishop or whatever. That is God's word. That's the highest authority there is in this universe.

And I'm going to obey that. And not a tradition passed down through centuries in some church. So this is what Jesus taught.

And we are to do it and teach other people all that he commanded. That the traditions of men can cancel out, invalidate verse 6. The word of God. These are the things that made the Pharisees furious.

And that's why they called him the prince of devils. And these are the things that make a lot of Christian leaders and Bible scholars and fundamentalist preachers who come through Bible school etc. Furious because it exposes their error and exposes their greediness.

And they will call you similar names. Beelzebul, prince of devils etc. But if you follow Jesus it won't disturb you one bit.

It'll be like water off a duck's back. You carry on standing true to what God told you to do. And you continue to proclaim the truth.

This is how it must be. And after that he called a multitude in verse 10. Jesus called them and said hear and understand.

Not what enters into the mouth defies the man but what proceeds out of the mouth this defies the man. You know there were a lot of laws in the Old Testament particularly the book of Leviticus chapter 11. Which had specific laws saying you can't eat this type of meat and you can't eat that type of food etc.

It was all meant to teach people the principle of separating, being separate from sin. To be sanctified, set apart from sin. That was the purpose of even giving laws like don't wear a clothing made half of linen and half of woolen.

I mean there's nothing sinful about that. We wear mixed material clothing all the time nowadays. But the Lord was trying to teach the principle of separation.

And principle of staying away from uncleanness. And in order to drill that into the minds of people he said don't eat certain types of food. Don't eat certain types of birds, certain types of fish and certain types of animals.

Don't eat their meat. Now we can take that and make a law out of it. There are people who will make a law out of it.

You know they say don't drink coffee and don't eat pork and things like that. And the Lord says it's not what goes into a mouth that defiles a man. He makes so many laws about these little, little things.

That's not the issue. What proceeds out of the mouth defiles the man. Now you know you can take that word and misuse it.

You can misquote even Jesus Christ. You know there are people who can take drugs, harmful drugs. And say Jesus said what goes into the mouth doesn't defile the man.

That's right. Taking a harmful drug will not defile you spiritually but it will ruin your body. It will kill you.

It's like taking poison. So don't misuse the word of God. Jesus didn't say it won't harm your body but it won't defile you spiritually.

But what is it that defiles us spiritually? What comes out of our heart like we considered earlier. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. So it's not what we eat that defiles us.

That may cause us a stomach upset if the food is not good. But what defiles us spiritually is not this ritualistic avoiding of certain types of food. Not even food offered to idols.

Because an idol is just a block of wood or stone. It doesn't mean anything. But what can defile us is what comes out of our heart.

As we considered earlier. Out of the heart comes forth evil thoughts and murders and adulteries and fornications. All types of things like that.

And then the disciples came and said. Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement? That means the Pharisees were offended that Jesus spoke so much against tradition. They really hated him for that.

That's what finally made them kill him. And the disciples came. They were disturbed when they saw the Pharisees were terribly upset at Jesus preaching against tradition.

And they came to him and said. Lord be careful. These guys are terribly upset.

They'll do something to you. And Jesus said. Every plant that my heavenly father did not plant will be rooted up.

We must never forget that. If you're following a tradition. Which God did not plant in his word.

One day it will be pulled out. You'd have wasted your life. Following something which God never said.

Which God never planted. If you're trying to have faith. For something that God has never promised.

You're going to be frustrated. I'll tell you you'll be frustrated. Every plant that my heavenly father did not plant will be rooted up.

If you're doing a work that God never told you to do. One day it will be rooted up. All your work will be rooted up.

Seek God to see whether what you're doing is what God has told you to do or not. Then he also said. Don't worry about them.

Just leave them alone. They are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man.

Both will fall into a pit. It's very very important dear brothers and sisters. That you don't follow blind leaders.

And in the context who are the blind leaders. The blind leaders are those. Who follow tradition.

And not God's word. Who are the leaders who can see. Those who see the word of God.

And follow that. So be careful which type of leaders you follow. Because you're going to end up where they end up.

If they're in a pit. You'll be in a pit too. And so we need to be careful.

What type of leaders we are following. Whether they are showing us what's written in God's word. Or the traditions of men.

We'll continue our study. In the next episode.

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