

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 69

by Zac Poonen

Jesus' teachings emphasize the importance of understanding and obeying His command to teach people to do everything He has commanded, and being prepared for the coming tribulation.

Duration: 25:59

Topics: "End Times", "Discipleship"

Description

This sermon delves into the teachings of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, emphasizing the importance of making disciples and teaching them to obey all that Jesus commanded. It explores the themes of deception, tribulation, and the signs of the end times, warning against false prophets and emphasizing the need for enduring love for Christ and one another. The sermon also discusses the gospel of the kingdom, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, and the certainty of Christ's return after the Great Tribulation.

Transcript

We continue our study today on all that Jesus taught. We've been looking through the Gospel of Matthew, seeking to obey the last command of Jesus mentioned in the last verse of this book, that we should go into all nations and after making disciples and baptizing them, teach them to do every single thing I have commanded. And if we are to fulfill that command, which is the neglected part of the Great Commission, there's a lot of evangelism being done, but very little disciple making and teaching people to do everything that Jesus commanded.

And if we want to do that, then we must try to understand from the Gospels, what did Jesus teach by his life, by his words, by the circumstances through which he took his disciples, and everything that we read in the Gospels. There's a message that comes through, and that is what we're seeking to study. In Matthew 24, Jesus is answering the question of the apostles as to when would the temple be destroyed and when would he be returning.

We saw last time that the first thing he mentioned repeatedly was deception. This is one thing we have to be extremely careful about. A person who goes to buy diamonds is concerned that he doesn't get cheated.

A person who goes to buy gold is concerned that he doesn't get cheated. Maybe he takes an expert with him who knows all about diamonds, all about gold. The same way, if we want to avoid deception, we've got to know the word of God.

We've got to love the truth. We must seek to be saved from sin. It's not by intellectual sharpness that we escape deception.

Many clever people are deceived. The devil came through the serpent. The devil is sharper and cleverer than the cleverest human being.

And so we cannot overcome him by cleverness. He's much cleverer than us and he can deceive the cleverest of Christians. And a lot of clever Christians are deceived.

So we must love the truth, seek to be saved from sin, and seek to obey God. Then we will know the doctrine. There's a word that Jesus spoke in John chapter 7, which is relevant in this connection.

He said if you want to know the truth, John chapter 7 and verse 17 says, if you desire to do, if anyone is willing to do God's will, he will know whether what I'm speaking is from myself or from God. So if I'm really desiring deep down in my heart to do the will of God, then I will know the truth. Then he goes on to say in Matthew 24, after speaking about deception in verse 5, that there'll be wars, rumors of wars that you hear of, and don't be frightened.

One of the words that Jesus constantly spoke in relation to the last days to his disciples was don't be afraid. It's a word that comes many times in his messages and when he speaks to people, fear not, fear not, fear not. Even in the Old Testament, don't be afraid.

God will be with you. These things must take place, but that is not yet the end. Wars and rumors of wars is not yet the end.

Nation will rise against nation. Kingdom against kingdom. There'll be famines and earthquakes.

And all these things are the beginning of birth pangs. The second coming of Christ is compared to the birth of a baby. That's why he uses that expression.

And you know that when a mother is looking forward to the birth of a baby, she realizes that before the birth of the baby, she's going to have a period of intense pain. And then only the baby is born. So Jesus speaks here about the birth pangs, the pains of birth that are going to precede the birth of the baby.

And he goes on to say that the wars, rumors of wars, and all these things, is only the beginning of birth pangs, and he speaks about persecution. They will deliver you up to tribulation. Do we look forward to tribulation? No.

Does a mother look forward to the birth pangs? No. What is she looking forward to? The birth of the baby. But she knows the birth pangs will come before.

Definitely, she knows that. So we don't look forward to tribulation, but we know that tribulation will come before the coming of Christ, without a doubt. It's one of the signs of the last days.

They'll deliver you to tribulation. And they will kill you. And you'll be hated by all nations on account of my name.

This is one of the clearest things that Jesus spoke. Yet everybody speaks of wars and rumors of wars and earthquakes and famines, but nobody speaks of the fact that there'll be a tribulation, there'll be a great tribulation before Christ comes again. And yet Jesus spoke about it so clearly.

And the reason is the devil has deceived the vast majority of Christendom, saying you will not go through the great tribulation. Christ will come and secretly rapture all of you, and you will escape the tribulation. There's not one verse in scripture that teaches that.

It's a lie of the devil. But he's fooled many evangelical Christians with it. They will deliver you up to tribulation.

Jesus said in John 16.33, In the world you will have tribulation. Tribulation is not the judgment of God. Christians will never face the judgment of God.

Tribulation is always from men. If there's a tribulation from God, that Christians will escape. And wars and famines are not tribulation from God.

There are many, many wars and famines that have taken place in history where even Christians have suffered. It's not a judgment from God. Far from it.

Then it says here at that time many will fall away and will deliver up one another and hate one another. One reason people fall away, one reason at that time is because their leaders never prepared them for tribulation. They were told Christ will come and secretly rapture you.

So they waited for that and tribulation came and they were not prepared and they fall away. This actually happened in China where for many years the missionaries taught them that Christ will come and rapture them. And then when tribulation came, many of them fell away from the faith.

Whose failure was that? It was the failure of the missionaries who didn't teach them that there will be tribulation before the rapture, before Christ comes. And at that time many will fall away, not a few. They'll hate one another and deliver up one another.

Many false prophets will arise, mislead many. And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. There's going to be such a lot of sin in the world, particularly through the entertainment industry.

Movies and music and the internet, pornography and all types of things. Sin is going to increase and abound with adultery and homosexuality and all types of things. And the love of many will become cold.

Instead of loving Jesus fervently, they will cool off. They may not give up Christ completely. It doesn't say they will forsake Christ.

They will just cool off in their love for God and they will cool off in their love for one another. They will hate one another. But the one who endures, verse 13, in love to Christ and to one another will be saved.

In the context, verse 13, it's referring to love. Most people's love will grow cold but. You see the context? Verse 12 and 13, most people's love will grow cold but the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Meaning the one who endures in love. In fervent love for Christ and in fervent love for one another. No matter how the other people treat him.

He will continue in love and therefore he will be saved. So salvation comes to the one who is willing to endure in love to the end. That is why love is the greatest.

It's not understanding of doctrine that's the greatest. It's love for Jesus, fervent love for Christ, and fervent love for one another. This is the message we have to proclaim in the last days to preserve people from cooling off.

And the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world. Not the gospel of escape from hell. There's a lot of difference between the gospel of escape from hell or the gospel of financial prosperity or the gospel of healing.

This is the gospel of the kingdom. Of the kingdom of God. What is the gospel of the kingdom of God? Which has to be preached in the whole world for a witness.

It doesn't say everybody will be converted. The way to life is narrow and very few find it. But it will be proclaimed as a witness.

This gospel of the kingdom, the kingdom of God is described in Romans 14 and verse 17. The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. So what is going to be proclaimed in the last days? The gospel of the kingdom of God.

Of righteousness. The gospel of righteousness. The gospel of peace.

Peace with God. Peace with men. Peace in your heart.

No strife, no panic, no turmoil. Peace in the home. The gospel of joy, of perpetual joy under all circumstances.

This is the gospel that's going to be preached in the last days. And you should belong to a church that is preaching righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. That's the church you should belong to.

And so we see here, this will be proclaimed as a witness to all nations. See, God is not, God wants the gospel to go everywhere. But the ultimate result of it is that there will be a pure testimony for the Lord in every nation.

There must be a testimony for the Lord in every nation for a witness to all the nations. It doesn't mean everybody will be converted. I don't think everybody will even get an opportunity to hear.

But there will be a witness to the Lord in all nations. Unfortunately, many people's emphasis is more on the quantity. We must get the gospel to everybody, which is a good desire.

I mean, Jesus himself said, take the gospel to all creatures. That's fine. But in a country like India, where we have one child born almost every second, and that means 3,600 babies born in an hour, you need to reach 3,600 people in an hour to be able to reach India alone.

Leave alone all other countries. Yeah, we don't want to deceive ourselves. It's almost impossible to reach every single individual with the gospel, with all the many languages there are.

But we can have a witness in every nation, a pure, uncompromising, quality witness for Christ. And that is the great need of the hour. And if we don't concentrate on that, we'll have this wishy-washy, third-rate, useless Christianity that we are trying to spread everywhere, doing good and a social gospel, plus many other good things, which are good, which the world will appreciate.

They'll give you awards for it, etc. But that's not the gospel Jesus preached. That's a byproduct of the gospel.

We're not against it. But the gospel must produce a pure witness for Christ. And then he speaks about the destruction of the temple, which is another question that they had asked earlier on in verse 3. He says, When you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, let the reader understand.

See, the holy place is in the temple. It's referring to the Jewish time. There's no temple for a church.

Church doesn't have a holy place. But he's answering that first question about when will the temple be destroyed? He said, I'll answer that. When will the temple be destroyed? When you see the abomination of desolation in the holy place, in the most holy place, that is.

And I heard it said that there was a pig sacrificed on the altar in the most holy place to desecrate that place in the eyes of the Jews. And that is probably the abomination of desolation that happened in 70 AD or whenever, when the temple was destroyed. And he says, when you see that, let the reader understand.

You'll understand it when it happens. This Jesus was speaking about something that would take place 40 years later. Then, let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

He's speaking specifically to the Jewish people. This is not for the last days. This is not the answer to the second question.

It's the answer to the first question. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. And if you're on the house stop, don't wait to go down and get anything.

Just run. And if you're out in the field, don't turn back to your house. Just run.

Because it's going to be a time of persecution. And woe unto those who got child in those days of nursing babes. Boy, it's going to be tough for them.

Because how are they going to run with their babies? And also pray that your flight will not be in winter. Because it's going to be difficult to run in winter. And pray that your flight will not be on a Sabbath day.

Because you'll easily be detected. He's referring to the Jews. The Jews did not move out on the Sabbath day.

So if they see people running, the Romans will detect them. So pray that it will not be like that. Prayer can change things, you know.

And those who took that seriously would have prayed. Because then there'll be a great tribulation. Such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now nor ever will be.

Now he's answering the second question. There will be a great tribulation. It's 2,000 years later almost from the time when the temple is destroyed.

And unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved but for the sake of the elect, those days will be cut short. So there's a fixed period that God has determined when the elect will go through tribulation. You know, when the Lord was speaking to the church in Revelation, to one of the

churches there in Revelation chapter 2, he says to the church in Smyrna, you're going to have tribulation, verse 10 in the middle, for 10 days.

Revelation 2, 10. You're going to have tribulation for 10 days. It's going to be a fixed period.

God allows it and then it'll be over. So this is the great comfort we have in any tribulation we go through, trial. God will not allow us to be tested beyond our ability.

It's a fixed period determined by God before it starts. Now we don't know when it ends, but God knows already when is the end. And when the end comes in one way or the other, God will put it to an end.

And we've seen that happen in different countries. God puts it to an end after some time. We see it happen in Rome in the beginning of the 4th century.

God put it to an end. There's terrible persecution in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. God put it to an end.

And so it will be cut short. And then at that time, you know, in those days, if anyone says, Oh, he has come. Oh, he's there.

The rapture has taken place. Don't believe it. Don't believe it.

2nd Thessalonians 2 says somewhat similar words. He writes to Thessalonians. Now we request you, brethren, 2nd Thessalonians 2, verse 1. With regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to him, there is a rapture.

I'm talking about, he says, the coming of Christ and our rapture, being taken up to be with him, which I spoke to you in my first letter, 1 Thessalonians 4. Don't be shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by some person claiming to speak in the spirit or a message saying, The rapture has taken place. The day of the Lord has come and you fellows are left behind. Don't you believe it.

Because that day will not, let no one deceive you, because that day will not come. Until first there's a great falling away in the church. We're seeing that happen now.

And the man of lawlessness, the son of perdition, destruction, who opposes and exalts himself is revealed. So that is the Antichrist. That day will not come until the Antichrist is revealed.

Don't you remember that while I was with you, I was telling you these things. And you know that now the power of God is restraining him until that particular time when that power will move out of the way so that he can be revealed. God restrains many things in this world.

He restrains demons from possessing every human being. There's a restraining force on earth. There's a restraint upon the coming forth of the Antichrist.

He's waited 2,000 years. One day that restraining force will move out of the way and the Antichrist will be revealed. Some people say the Holy Spirit will be removed.

No, the Holy Spirit will be here because nobody's going to be converted without the Holy Spirit. And there are people going to be converted in the days of the Antichrist because the Holy Spirit is leading people to repentance. So he'll be here very much.

And unless those days had been cut off, hardly anybody would say it's going to be a tremendous time of persecution. Verse 24 of Matthew 24. False Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders and mislead, if possible, the elect.

I have told you in advance. I warned you in advance. There's going to be deception, fake miracles, and don't believe anybody who says he's coming here, he's coming there, secret rapture is taking place.

Don't believe it. Because, he says, don't ever believe if he says he's in the wilderness. Verse 26.

Or he's here, he's in the inner rooms. Don't believe it. When somebody says Christ came to my room and sat beside me, don't believe it.

Because when he comes, it won't be in secret. Verse 27. Just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

It is such a crystal clear statement of the Lord that I can't understand how anybody in the world can believe that the coming of the Lord is secret. It's like the lightning coming, the coming of the Son of Man. This whole teaching of the secret rapture is only about 150 years old, really, in Christendom.

The early apostles never believed it. The early Christians never believed it. It's nowhere written in the scriptures.

People in persecuted countries never believed it. It arose in countries that never had persecution for years. In England, in America, that's where it originated.

This teaching of a secret rapture. But because they had a great influence on Christianity around the world, they spread that doctrine around the world. And the people spread it through the Scofield Bible and all those things, and gradually everybody began to believe it.

But it's not the truth. And a lot of people are being deceived, who are not going to be ready for the tribulation, because the devils fooled them to believe that they'll never face it. So, it's better to believe what the Bible says.

Wherever the corpse is there, the vultures will gather. Yeah, he's using an illustration that, just like the corpses, just like vultures gather when there's a corpse, perhaps it means that it's an illustration, perhaps, to either say that it'll be a time of great judgment, and many will die when Christ comes, or that we will be drawn to Christ, just like vultures are drawn to the corpse automatically. We don't know exactly.

We wouldn't like to be dogmatic on that interpretation. But here is the answer. Immediately after the tribulation, as to when the tribulation will take place, the answer is here in verse 29.

Immediately after the tribulation, this great tribulation that he spoke of in verse 21, immediately after that, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky, the powers of the heavens will be shaken, and then, and then, only after that, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and the Son of Man will come in the clouds of the sky with power and great glory, and he'll send forth his angels with a great trumpet, and they will gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of the sky to the other. That's the time when his elect is going to be gathered up and raptured. Now this fits in with what it says in 1 Thessalonians 4. In 1 Thessalonians 4, we are told about the details of the rapture, but not about the time.

But let us look at the details of the rapture in 1 Thessalonians 4. Scripture agrees with Scripture. In 1 Thessalonians 4, it says here, the Lord himself will descend, verse 16. He speaks about a shout, the voice of the archangel, the trumpet of God.

Notice these expressions. The Lord will descend, the archangel, trumpet of God, we who are alive and will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Notice all these things.

Notice the same things here in Matthew 24. The sign of the Son of Man will appear, verse 30, in the sky, clouds, trumpet, verse 31, angels, and the elect being raptured up. When will it take place? Not mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4, but mentioned in Matthew 24, 29, immediately after the Great Tribulation, similar to what it says in 2 Thessalonians 2, after the Antichrist is revealed.

It is so crystal clear that I don't know how in the world Satan managed to fool people, millions of Christians, who, I'll tell you how, they don't study the Bible. They just believe what some preacher says. And if you've got a Bible in your own language and you don't read it, then you deserve to be deceived.

That's clear. I want to encourage you, dear friends, to read the Bible, and then you'll never be deceived. Then he says about one single sign, he says the sign of the fig tree.

When its branch is already tender, it puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. That's referring to the nation of Israel, and we mentioned that earlier about the fig tree that was cursed, but it will put forth its leaves again. So when the nation of Israel, it's not going to be a spiritual, there's no fruit there, but it comes forth as a nation, again, that dead fig tree is going to be revived, then you know that summer is here, and even so you know when these things happen that Jesus is near, his coming is near.

That generation will not pass away until all these things take place, and that's why we feel that we are in the last generation. How long that's going to take place, whether the generation is 70 years or 40 years, I don't know, but it's going to be the last generation which sees all these signs, and heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. Of that day and hour, no one knows.

No one knows the exact date. That's clear. All these people who claim to predict an exact date are just fooling you, but you will know, he said, when he's near.

There are two truths here. You will know, verse 33, when he's near, but of the exact day and hour, no one will know. So we're not to look for an exact date, like some people say on so and so date, Christ will come through the years.

So many people have predicted dates, they've all turned out to be false, but at the same time, we're not to remain in ignorance of saying, well, it's just the same as it has always been. Peter says in 2 Peter 3, that some people will say, well, a lot of people have been talking about the coming of Christ for ages, but everything is going on just like before, and they say in 2 Peter 3, 4, where is the promise of his coming? Since the fathers fell asleep, everything is going on just like in the beginning of creation, but this escapes their notice, that God is waiting patiently. So the coming of Christ is near.

We'll know when he's near, but we don't know the exact date. So let's be ready for his coming. We will continue in our next episode.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/olwo2Y6-9ks.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/all-that-jesus-taught-bible-study-part-69/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net