

All That Jesus Taught Bible Study - Part 72

by Zac Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faithfulness, the sovereignty of God, and the need to serve Him with a right motive, while also highlighting the importance of worship and sacrifice.

Duration: 25:28

Scripture: Matthew 26:1

Topics: "Faithfulness To God", "Sacrificial Worship"

Description

This sermon delves into the final messages Jesus spoke to his disciples before his crucifixion, emphasizing faithfulness, readiness for His coming, and the importance of motives and inner purity in serving others. It contrasts the actions of those who heal the sick but lack proper motives with those who visit the sick with pure hearts. The sovereignty of God in allowing and thwarting schemes against His servants is highlighted, along with the significance of seizing opportunities to serve God sacrificially. The act of worship through costly sacrifice, exemplified by the woman anointing Jesus, is explored, emphasizing the value of worshiping God with our best. The reactions of Peter and Judas to correction are compared, illustrating the importance of receiving correction humbly and with a heart willing to learn.

Transcript

We continue our study in all that Jesus taught, and we've come to chapter 26 of Matthew, verse 1. And it came about that when Jesus had finished all these words, he said to his disciples, You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be delivered up for crucifixion. And after Jesus had finished all these words, these were the last words that he spoke before he went to Gethsemane, and before he went to Jerusalem for the final days before the crucifixion. There was this time when someone anointed his feet with oil, and then we read of the last supper, and then he went to the cross.

So these were just a short while before he went to the cross. These were the last messages he spoke to his disciples. In the last supper, of course, he spoke some more to them about the coming of the Holy Spirit, etc., in John 14, 15, 16, and we read of his prayer in verse 17.

But prior to that, it's very interesting to see that the last words that Jesus spoke were related to faithfulness and being ready for his coming. In our personal life, in the story of the virgins, in the use of our gifts, in the gifts God's given us, in the story of the talents, and in our relationship with others who are needy in the church. How we treat the sick.

Are we able to serve them? It's very interesting to see the contrast between those who enter God's kingdom and all they did was visit the sick. Like it says in Matthew 25, and I was sick, verse 36, and you visited me. And they get into God's kingdom.

Whereas those, in Matthew 7, who say, we heal the sick, in verse 22, they go to hell. Isn't that interesting? Matthew 7, 22, and 23. That those who healed the sick went to hell and those who visited the sick went to heaven.

What is the reason? Motive. Motive. One.

Secondly, what is their inner life like? If there was sin in their inner life, then all the exercise of gifts becomes worthless. And if the motive is honor for oneself and not the glory of God, then it doesn't count for anything. There we read of people boasting, Lord, we healed the sick.

We did miracles. Here people say, I don't even remember when I visited the sick. When was that? So, it's very important to see that God doesn't see the way man sees.

God doesn't evaluate our service and our life the way man evaluates. Completely different. And that's why it's important to study scripture, so that we get God's perspective on things.

Most Christians don't have God's perspective on things. They evaluate their service and their life very often exactly the way worldly people evaluate their life and service. But we need to reorient our thinking so that we begin to think more like God thinks, so that we don't waste our earthly life.

Having said these things and finished all these things, then he said to his disciples, after two days, the Passover is coming. These were spoken. These words were spoken just a couple of days before he went to the cross.

And then he'll be delivered up to crucifixion. The chief priests and elders had gathered together in the court of the high priest and they had already plotted to seize Jesus by stealth and to kill him. But they were saying, not during the festival, lest there a riot occur among the people.

It's very interesting to see how religious people who are supposed to, who claim to be servants of God and supposed to be the representatives of God among the people, can scheme together to hurt a prophet of God. It happened in Jesus' time. It happens even now, where religious people get together and scheme and plan to hurt God's true servants, but it does not succeed.

If it does not succeed, they may hurt him physically, but they will only fulfill God's perfect plan for that person. Any true servant of God who really seeks to follow Jesus will find similar experiences to what Jesus experienced as well. Religious people, the top religious people, may hate you.

And they may scheme and do all types of things in order to get at you in some way or to trouble you in some way, take you to court. And they scheme and manipulate things in order to take you to court. There'll be bribery, corruption, all types of things.

But God, who's watching the whole thing, will turn their plans into foolishness. That's a wonderful thing. We can actually pray for that.

We read that when one of David's friends, called Ahithophel, had left David and joined up with his rebellious son Absalom, you read in the Old Testament that someone prayed, Lord, turn the counsel of

Ahithophel to foolishness. And God did that. And the plan and scheme to kill David did not succeed.

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord. Everybody's heart is in the hand of the Lord. He can make people act in a certain way when they try to harm you.

He will not allow the godly to be touched without his permission. Of course, finally, when the time came, God allowed them to kill Jesus, to kill Paul and the apostles, etc. But not before God's time.

It's very, very important to understand that. Very often you read in the Gospels, my hour has not yet come. So here were all these people scheming and all that, but they could not do it until God's time.

I want you to see in this connection Acts of the Apostles in Chapter 2. In Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 2, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, says these words concerning Jesus the Nazarene. There are a number of things he reveals here about his ministry. Acts, Chapter 2, verse 22, Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through him in your midst.

So that's the first thing Peter says, inspired by the Holy Spirit, that the miracles that Jesus did were not primarily examples for all of us to follow because in the history of the Christian faith, nobody, repeat, nobody has ever been able to have the type of healing and miraculous ministry that Jesus had. We can preach as he did, but we can't heal as he did, or do miracles as he did. And we read here that those miracles were signs to attest the fact that he was the Messiah, not something for us to copy.

When Jesus said, follow me, he wasn't telling us to follow him in doing miracles. He was telling him to follow him in the way he walked the way of the cross all his life. And the other thing we see here that Peter says, inspired by the Holy Spirit, in verse 23 is, this man was delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God.

That wasn't an accident, his being captured. It was part of God's predetermined plan. And you nailed him to a cross.

That means long before time began, the Bible speaks about the lamb slain from the foundation of the world in the book of Revelation. Slain from the foundation of the world means long before Genesis 1, verse 1, God knew that Adam was going to sin and God made provision for Adam and his race to be redeemed from their sin, those who wanted to respond, and had already determined that Christ was going to be crucified. And like it says in Galatians 4, in the fullness of time, God sent his son.

There was a particular time in human history when God planned that Jesus Christ would be born on this earth, down to the exact date, the exact date when he should be crucified. It's also mentioned in Daniel chapter 9, when the Messiah will be cut off, and that he should be resurrected. It is all planned, the predetermined plan and foreknowledge, the God who can see the future.

It was part of his plan. So Caiaphas, and what you read in Matthew 26, verse 3 and 4, they plotted together, verse 4, to seize Jesus by stealth and kill him. They thought that they were planning something which God didn't know about.

God knew about it before he created Adam, that Caiaphas and all these others would plot together, and what were they going to do? They were only going to fulfill God's predetermined plan according to his foreknowledge. Now if you understand that, we will not be worried if we are serving God and we are his children. If you hear that somebody is scheming and plotting something against you, what in the world are

they going to do? What in the world are they going to accomplish? Only that which God's predetermined plan and foreknowledge has planned for your life.

They won't be able to do anything outside of that. And that's a great comfort for us to know. There are little glimpses we have here of the total sovereignty of God.

Our Father who art in heaven, that's how he taught us to pray. When we pray, we must not only look to God who is our dad, but one who is sovereign, one who has control over all circumstances and everything. Sovereign God who determines even if somebody is plotting to kill you.

Now if you believe that, you'll never be anxious. You'll never be anxious whatever people are scheming or planning against you because you say, well that's just the predetermined plan of God according to his foreknowledge and I live in the center of God's will and therefore nothing can happen to me and nobody can ever do anything or scheme or plan anything without God's permission. That's so important for us to know in times of persecution particularly.

And if you're established in this faith, then we will not be in a panic or in anxiety even in times of persecution. And the little trials that come our way now when we are not being persecuted, the little, little trials that come along the way, we say well God's planned this ahead of time. Romans 8, 28.

God makes everything work together for good to those who love him and who are called according to his purpose. And verse 6. One more thing I want to say and they were planning to kill him and when they killed him on a particular day, that was the Passover day. You know initially they said, well not during the festival, lest a riot occur among the people.

But he had to be killed on the Passover day and that was determined before the world was created. The exact date on which Jesus was to be killed. In fact, the Israelites coming out of Egypt on the 14th day of the first month, the Passover day, was determined on the basis of when Christ would die.

1,500 years later. So that's how that date was determined 1,500 years earlier. This date Christ is going to die.

God sees in his foreknowledge. Okay, then that is going to be the date when I'm going to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt. And they should put the blood out, kill the lamb and put the blood outside the door.

See this was the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God. But here it looked as if it may not be like that. They said, well we shouldn't do it during the festival.

But finally they did it on the Passover day. Even though some discussion about that initially, saying they wouldn't do it then. But God had planned it.

And so it happened right on the date of the Passover that he was crucified. The perfect timing of God in everything, even in the scheming and planning of others. And here we see the next incident, something that happened just before Jesus went to the cross.

When Jesus was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper. A woman came to him with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume. And she poured it upon his head as he reclined at the table.

But the disciples were indignant when they saw this and said, why this waste? And it was particularly Judas Iscariot we read. This is possibly the same event as mentioned in John chapter 12. And it was

Judas Iscariot who said, why should this be wasted? Because this perfume could have been sold for a high price.

And we know from John 12 it was 300 denarii. Or a laboring man's wage for 10 months or exclude the holidays, one year. 300 days wages.

One full year's wages. And it could have been sold for that and the money given to the poor. And there it says that Judas Iscariot said that because, not that he cared for the poor.

But because he could swipe that money and use it himself. Like he was doing the rest of the money in the bank. And when Jesus was aware that these people were speaking like this.

That they felt this money was wasted, pouring it out on Jesus' body. You know, pouring it on his head and flowing down his whole body. What a waste of such an expensive perfume.

In a moment it's all gone. One year's wages are gone in a moment. Is it worth wasting our life on Jesus like that? And Jesus said to them, why do you bother this woman? She's done a good deed.

The poor, you always have with you. You don't always have me. We shouldn't think that a lavish spending on Christ and for his glory is a waste.

You know, sometimes we can think that only helping the poor is the only good thing that a Christian can do. And that's where we need to hear this word. This woman did not give it to the poor.

She poured it out on Jesus, on his body. And that's a picture of the body of Christ today. We are the church with the body of Christ.

To pour out anointment to bless and anoint the body of Christ. That's worth it. We may think, well, that money should have been given to the poor.

But that's not necessarily God's will always. Of course, Jesus was the first person to help the poor. And all the disciples were eager to help the poor.

But there is a place for anointing the body of Christ with something valuable, sacrificial and expensive. The body of Christ today. Notice something else here.

When she poured this perfume upon my body, Jesus says in verse 12, she did it to prepare me for the burial. Now, it's interesting to note that when Jesus rose from the dead on that day, Jesus was crucified on Thursday and there were two sabbaths after that. One a special sabbath on the Friday and the regular sabbath on Saturday.

So the women could not go to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus because they had to bury it in a hurry on the Thursday. And when they really finally went to the tomb on Sunday, they found it was too late. He had already risen.

There was no way to anoint the body of Jesus. But there was one woman who did it. And she did it because she did it before he was crucified.

Jesus said that. She's anointed my body with perfume, preparing it for burial. Well, he wasn't even dead.

Where's the question of burial? But here Jesus knew none of the other women would get a chance. She did this earlier, before the crucifixion, and thereby his body was anointed. Now what we learn from that is, take time and opportunity to serve God and waste your life on him when you have the opportunity.

If you wait for some later time, you may not get the opportunity at all. Those who waited for the later time to anoint the body of Jesus after his crucifixion found on the resurrection morning, they missed the opportunity. It was gone.

Sometimes you wait for a future time to do something and you won't get the opportunity. Now is the time. Always.

Now is the time. If you have opportunity to do good to the members of the body of Christ, do it now. If you postpone it, you will not get the opportunity.

That's the message in this incident. She did not know, but she had the money with her. She thought, well, let me do something for Jesus.

And she went and got the perfume and poured it out upon him. And little did she know that she'd be the only one who could anoint the body of Jesus for the burial. And Jesus said that.

And he went on to say in verse 13, Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will be spoken in memory of her. And that has been fulfilled over the last 2,000 years, that this word through the Bible has gone across the whole world in hundreds of tongues and languages. And what this woman has done is being proclaimed all over the world.

What is that? That when she had opportunity, she anointed the body of Jesus with a very expensive perfume. And what we do as well will one day resound at the judgment seat of Christ. So take this to heart, that when you have opportunity, that's the time that you need to do good to the body of Christ.

Don't postpone it, because what you postpone, you will not get the opportunity to do. And this anointing is an act of worship. And we can learn something about worship there.

Worship is always something costly and sacrificial. And it's something which requires giving that which is very valuable to us, to the Lord. David said once in 2 Samuel 24, in verse 24, I will not offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing.

Now this woman could have taken something very cheap, some cheap perfume and anointed the body of Jesus, but she didn't. She had saved up one year's wages. I don't know how many years she took to save one year's wages.

You think of yourself, how long does it take? What is your wage in one year? What's your salary in one year? Then ask yourself, how long will it take for you to save that much money? A number of years. So here she saved this. Maybe it was her life savings.

Probably it was. And she went and spent it all in the market to get a very expensive perfume, and she poured it on the head of Jesus. And so there we learn that worship is something that involves sacrifice.

We move on to verse 14. Then one of the twelve named Judas Iscariot went to the chief priest. That word then is very important.

Now if you compare this passage with John chapter 12, you see that it was Judas Iscariot who primarily said, Well, this could have been given to the poor. And the disciples probably agreed with him. But he was really saying that so that money could come into his bag.

And when Jesus said these words, Why do you trouble this woman? She's done a good deed. Why do you bother her? And she's come to anoint my body for the burial, and you folks are stopping her, and whatever she's done is going to be proclaimed throughout the whole world. Judas was offended because he was corrected publicly.

Do you get offended if somebody corrects you publicly? Well, Judas was like that. And as soon as he got offended, it says, Then he went to the chief priest and said, What are you willing to give me if I deliver him up to you? See, it was that offense that came because he was humiliated publicly by being corrected. It was a very small thing.

Compare his reaction to correction with Peter's reaction to correction. In an earlier study, we saw how Jesus once turned around to Peter and said, Get behind me, Satan. That is a very strong correction, a very strong public rebuke.

Much worse than this. This was hardly a correction at all. But you see, Peter's reaction to that was, Lord, to whom shall we go? These are the words of eternal life.

I'm not going to be offended. What you said is right. I was thinking in a satanic way, seeking my own interests.

But here was something much, much smaller. But when he was corrected, he got offended. And he immediately went to betray Jesus.

And he began looking for an opportunity. And the chief priest said, Sure, we'd like you to betray him to us. Give us 30 pieces.

They gave him 30 pieces of silver in verse 15. And from then on, he began looking for a good opportunity to betray him. So there we see the reaction of Peter to correction in Matthew 16.

And the reaction of Judas to correction. When you combine Matthew 16 with John chapter 6. Get behind me, Satan. Peter's response is, Lord, to whom shall we go? These are the words of eternal life.

Here, leave this woman alone. She's done a good thing. Don't think only of giving money to the poor.

And Judas takes offense at that. And goes and betrays Jesus. You know, it's a pretty serious thing to be offended by a little correction.

You ask yourself, what is your attitude to correction? When an older brother who loves you, maybe the elder in your church, corrects you about something. If you get offended, you can follow in Judas' footsteps and destroy your life. On the other hand, you can say, well, correction.

Those are the words of eternal life. Like it says in the Psalms, Let the righteous smite me. It'll be like oil upon my head.

I'm going to receive the correction from a righteous, godly man. Because that's like somebody anointing me with oil. What a wonderful way to react to correction.

So let's learn that lesson here. And react like Peter did. And realize that every word of correction is a word of eternal life.

We'll continue in our next episode.

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