

(Through the Bible) Matthew - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen's sermon emphasizes the transition from Old Covenant to New Covenant living, focusing on the importance of a heart set on heavenly things and following Jesus as our ultimate example.

Duration: 58:26

Scripture: Matthew 16:18, Matthew 18:3, Matthew 18:18, Matthew 18:21-35, Matthew 28:18-20

Topics: "Discipleship", "Humility"

Description

This sermon delves into the teachings of the Gospel of Matthew, emphasizing the importance of humility, revelation, forgiveness, and discipleship. It highlights the need to be like little children in humility, to seek revelation from God, to forgive others to maintain God's forgiveness, and to focus on discipleship rather than external appearances. The sermon also stresses the authority of Jesus in the Great Commission, urging believers to make disciples, baptize them, and teach obedience to all of Jesus' commands.

Transcript

Let's continue our study in the Gospel of Matthew, which we saw yesterday, was a description of the kingdom of heaven, as opposed to the earthly kingdom that the Jews had for fifteen hundred years. And we saw that Matthew wrote especially to the Jews, and we could apply it like this to us. Are we Jews? And we say no.

But if you are a Christian, and your mind is set on earthly things, you are a Jew. I'm sorry to say that, but you are an Old Covenant person. The Old Covenant people, their mind was set on the land of Canaan, on property, on money, on healing, on prosperity, and any believer whose mind is set on these things is living under the Old Covenant.

For such people, the Gospel of Matthew is written. So let's not write it off saying, well, we're not Jews. Maybe you are more than you think.

It's not a question of name. Romans 2, the last verse says, a Jew is not one who is just outwardly in name. We may say we are Christians by name.

It doesn't make a difference. It's a question of where your mind is set. And that's very important.

Conversion is a change of mind. Repentance means to change your mind. Change your mind from what to what.

Colossians 3, verse 2 says, set your mind on things that are above and not on things that are on the earth. Second Corinthians 4 says, the things that are seen are temporary. The things that are unseen are eternal.

So Matthew is the first Gospel in the New Testament to seeking to lead us, introduce us to this New Covenant life, which is heavenly. And that's why you have those laws that we saw in Matthew 5, which are all heavenly. He says, when you are under the old covenant, you were told this is good enough that you don't murder.

What I say to you, that's not good enough. You've got to have purity in your heart. They said to you under the old covenant, it was good enough if you didn't commit adultery.

I say to you in the kingdom of heaven, that was all right for the kingdom of earth. But in the kingdom of heaven, you must have purity in your heart. So a Christian who lives just by the 10 commandments, I don't murder, I don't adultery, I don't commit adultery, I don't do all these external sins, is really a Jew under the old covenant.

Who is the one who has entered into the new covenant, who has understood the kingdom of heaven? The one who has taken what is written in Matthew 5 seriously. The one who fasts and prays to show other people is still under the old covenant. So we could go on and on and on like that.

So Matthew 10 is really, the gospel of Matthew is introducing us to the kingdom of heaven. Now I want you to turn to Matthew chapter 11 today. We read there about John the Baptist in prison.

Now remember that John the Baptist was the one who saw heavens open and Jesus being anointed with the dove descending on him and the voice from heaven saying, this is my beloved son, whom I am well pleased. Now one would think that if you and I had seen something like that once, we would never doubt again for the rest of our lives. But we see how much of an old covenant person John was when we read here that when he was in prison, verse 2, he heard of the works of Christ and he sent word by his disciples saying, are you the expected one or the coming one or shall we look for someone else? How did doubt come into the heart of the one whom Jesus said was the greatest man in Old Testament times? Because when he heard the wonderful things Jesus was doing about opening blind eyes, healing the sick, the thought that came into his mind was, if that's the case, why am I still in prison? Why doesn't he kill Herod and release me? And when a Christian gets into a difficulty and he begins to think, why doesn't God kill this difficult person who is troubling me and deliver me from this, you are thinking exactly like an old covenant person.

You see, old covenant thinking is like that. There's no question of my being in prison. Whereas when Paul and Silas were in prison, they were praising the Lord.

They didn't say, Lord, are you really the one? See this is the difference between new covenant and old covenant. And that is why I have often said the vast majority of believers live under the old covenant. They live exactly like old covenant believers.

When they commit adultery, they say, oh, David committed adultery. When they get depressed, they say, well, Elijah got depressed. When they get angry and break something, they say Moses also broke the tablets of stone when he got angry.

There's justification for everything. But can they say Jesus got angry and broke something? Can they say Jesus got depressed and sat under a juniper tree? Can they say Jesus committed adultery? No, they are running the race looking unto Moses, not looking unto Jesus, looking unto David, looking unto Jeremiah. So there are many, many ways in which I could prove to you that the vast majority of Christians live under the old covenant.

They don't follow the outstanding examples of Moses selflessly praying for others or Elijah forsaking everything and living wholeheartedly before God's face. They look for excuses for their sin in these few examples in the old covenant. Now, if you are like that, you are taking the Bible to find an excuse for your sin when this book was actually written to deliver you from sin.

Don't ever go to the Bible to find an excuse for your sin, saying David did that. I've seen great preachers who fall into adultery say that. No, don't ever go to the scriptures to find an excuse for your sin.

Don't go to the scriptures to find an excuse for your depression. If you go to the scriptures, the Bible says the scripture has been given to us to show us the glory of Jesus Christ. And if you can show me that Jesus was depressed and Jesus was defeated, then please follow that example.

But you don't ever find that. So I want to encourage all of you and help all of you to look at the scriptures in a completely different way from the way you're you've been taught perhaps for years to look at to find an excuse for sin in the examples of godly men who fell in the scripture. Rather look at Jesus.

This is the new covenant example. And the longer you comfort yourself by examples of people who fell in the Old Testament, the longer you are going to live as an old covenant Christian. My desire is to lift all of you to this new covenant thing.

So John doubted because he thought, I'm in prison. And if Jesus is almighty, shouldn't he deliver me? Don't you get questions like that? What did Jesus do? Jesus could have called 72,000 angels to deliver John from prison immediately. He didn't do that.

He said, go and tell John when the people came to him, verse four, that the blind received sight and so on, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. That is the new covenant, the gospel. And the gospel does not include deliverance from prison or killing Herod or killing Caesar or killing the Pharisees.

It does not include that. It does. What it does include is overcoming sin and living by faith, knowing that God knows what is best for me.

If it is prison, prison. But we can't blame John the Baptist because John the Baptist was not under the new covenant. He was under law.

He was not under grace. He did not have the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. But we can certainly blame Christians today who say they are baptized in the Holy Spirit and who say they are under the new covenant if they behave like that.

So Jesus went on to say, he said, don't criticize John the Baptist just because he asked a question like that. Do you know what he is? Did you go there to see a prophet? Verse 9, he's more than a prophet. I told you yesterday how Jesus had no hesitation to express appreciation for people.

And here is another example. Verse 11, among those who are born of women, there has never arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist. Up till that time, who was the greatest human being born up to the time of Jesus? It was not Mary, the mother of Jesus, like many Christians think.

No, it was John the Baptist. Jesus himself said John the Baptist was greater than Mary. And I would say that to all those who adore Mary.

You better adore John the Baptist too, if that's the case. He's greater than her. He Jesus himself said he was the greatest.

But he said, here's something wonderful. The greatest person under the old covenant was John the Baptist, but the least person in the new covenant can rise higher than him. That means greater than him means when the least person in the new covenant is locked up in prison, he will not ask questions like, Lord, are you really the one we are trusting in or should we look for another? He will not have such questions.

That is the difference in the new covenant. So that's why it says, if John the Baptist was the greatest and our calling is higher than that, then why do you look at Jeremiah, David, Moses to find excuses for your sin? No, who is our example today? None of these men. There are good qualities in Abraham, Moses, Elijah, which we can follow, but don't follow their failures.

Today, our example is Jesus Christ. Another thing we see here in verse 12 onwards is that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and only those who are violent to possess it will possess it. Not everyone can get into God's kingdom.

What does it mean to be violent? Externally, Christians are men of peace, but inwardly they do violence to anything that stands in their way of following the Lord. So externally people of peace and inwardly people of violence against Satan, violence against the lusts in my flesh, that's the only way to possess the kingdom. If you are half-hearted, you will not be able to take the kingdom of heaven.

You will remain an earthly person all your life. If you are going to please your parents and you are taken up with other things that divide your attention and you don't do violence to these things that prevent you from loving God with all your heart, anything that prevents you from loving God with all your heart, whether it's your job or your parents or the pursuit of money or anything, we have to do violence to them. Violence means you've got to kill it.

Kill those desires. Otherwise, we will remain Jews all our life. We'll never become Christians.

We'll never become disciples. We may become like the third-rate Christians who call themselves Christians all around us. If you're happy with that, that's fine.

They are actually Jews, not Christians, because their mind is set on earthly things. Here he's talking about the kingdom of heaven. And then we see further, the Lord in chapter 11, verse 25, says these words, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I praise Thee that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and the intelligent and revealed them to babes.

I mentioned this once before, that God has hidden many truths, most of these new covenant truths that I'm talking about. You will never be able to discover by study. You can read every commentary in the world, you won't discover it, because these things are hidden from the clever and the intelligent.

They are revealed to babes, those who've got a, first of all, a pure heart, not a clever head. It doesn't matter if they have a clever head or not clever head, it doesn't make a difference. It's like whether the color of your skin is white or brown or black, doesn't make a difference to God's kingdom.

Intelligence also, whether it's high or medium or low, doesn't make a difference. Your heart must be pure, and that's what children have. And the other thing about children is that they are teachable.

You know, a little child, he doesn't know anything. And it admits that it doesn't know anything. Everything it will ask daddy, daddy, why are these white lines drawn on the road? He doesn't know.

We know why those lines are drawn, so the traffic goes this way and that way. You see, even a simple thing like that, a child does not know. And little, little things, you know how children are, ordinary things.

Why is it like this? Jesus said, those who come to scripture like that, Lord, I don't know. What does this mean, Lord? You know, there are very few believers who come like that. They would rather consult what other people have written instead of going to God and saying, Lord, you wrote this book.

Can't you tell me what it means? See, this is the privilege of being in the new covenant, to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to have the Holy Spirit teach us. And even when we listen to men teaching us, Christ himself has appointed teachers in the church. Otherwise, we wouldn't be having sessions like this.

What's the use of sessions like this if you can just sit at home and listen to the Holy Spirit? But the Bible says, Christ has appointed teachers in the church. But even when you listen to those teachers, if you finish with, if you stop with the teacher, you'll never understand. I always tell people, please remember that everything you hear from me is secondhand.

I got it from the Lord. You got it from me. Maybe it's true, but it's still secondhand.

You need to take the secondhand stuff, which you hear, and take it before the Lord and say, Lord, make it firsthand now. Make it my own experience, what I heard now. Then it will be yours forever.

That'll be like taking the manna into the most holy place and keeping it there. It'll be fresh forever in God's presence. If you don't do that, even what you receive now will begin to stink like the manna that came from heaven.

You may say this came from heaven, right? But it'll stink by tomorrow. So we have to come with this teachable attitude and say, Lord, teach me. Verse 28, Jesus said, come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

This is the meaning of the Old Testament Sabbath. Today, it's not a physical day of rest. It is this rest that Jesus gives to us.

It comes by coming to him. It comes by acknowledging that we are weary and heavy laden. You know, I use this verse for people who want to, sometimes people come to our church and say, well, Brother Jack, I'd like to join your church.

And I ask them, why do you want to join our church? And they think they will make me happy by saying, well, I belong to that church over there and I'm sick and tired of all the people over there, and so I thought I'd join you. And he thinks he's going to get a warm welcome from me. I say, Brother, if you were sick and tired of those people, you stay with us a few days, you'll get sick and tired of us also.

So don't join us. But because we are a bunch of people who are sick and tired of ourselves, not of other people. And if you're sick and tired of yourself, come and join us.

We'll have wonderful fellowship. But if you're sick and tired of this denomination or that denomination, you better stay there. You'll come here and become sick and tired of us.

See, a lot of people are trying to grab other people from other churches. Are you sick and tired of that denomination? They say, that's right. That's a terrible place.

Come and join us. And they come here and cause trouble here. Jesus said, come to me, those who are sick and tired of themselves.

That's the meaning here. Are you sick and tired of yourself, of your defeated life, of your, the lack of victory in your life, the lack of victory in your family life, the lack of anointing in your ministry? Are you sick and tired of that? Lord says, come. But if you're sick and tired of other people and you're always looking at the faults of other people, wait.

Don't come to Jesus because you don't qualify. You're not ready to come. Don't think anybody can just walk into Jesus' presence.

You've got to be weary and heavy laden. That means you've got to be sick and tired of your own defeated, depressed, gloomy life and lack of anointing and freshness. The Lord says, come to me, I'll give you rest.

You know, it's not God's will that our life should be always agitated, irritated, upset. No, I believe God's will is that my heart should be at rest 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. That's God's will, at rest, whatever may happen around me.

But that can come if I acknowledge my defeated life and come to Jesus and say, Lord, give me this rest. Bring me into the Sabbath. And then Jesus said, take my yoke upon you and learn from me.

A disciple is a learner. A disciple comes to Jesus to learn, like a child that's teachable. Lord, teach me.

And what do we have to learn from Jesus, first of all? Many people come to Jesus to learn many, many things. We would like to learn how to preach. We'd like to learn how to do evangelism, how to do Bible teaching, how to prophesy.

Jesus said, before all that, learn from me how to be gentle. We are all so hard and harsh. And Jesus says, learn to be gentle and learn to be humble.

Those are the first things we need to learn. And there are not many Christians running after Jesus to learn gentleness and humility. You look at some gifted servant of God and you wish that Jesus could make you like that.

That's the wrong thing to pursue. What you need to pursue is the character you see in that man, not his ministry. Do you know that many of you can envy a person's ministry and want a person's ministry more than his character? And Jesus never encouraged that.

He didn't say, come to me and I will teach you how to do this, that, and the other. First of all, learn humility and gentleness. And then you will find rest for your souls.

And then I will make you fishers of men. That's what he said. He'll make us fishers of men.

He'll make us teachers to the church. But first of all, we need to come to rest. Now if I become a fisher of men and I'm not at rest in my own heart, or I become a teacher in the church and I'm not at rest in my own heart, I'm going to have tremendous problems and cause problems for others too.

And then it's very significant that immediately after that comes this section on the Sabbath. Chapter 12 verses 1 to 13. He had spoken about rest and then he went around for the next two incidents mentioned there, he went around demolishing the Jewish idea of the Sabbath.

He allowed his disciples to pick the heads of grain on the Sabbath day and the Pharisees began to complain. The Pharisees' idea of Sabbath was, rest was, not what Jesus said in Matthew 11, 28 to 30. Their idea of rest was, you don't do any work.

You don't gather grain and eat it up on the Sabbath day. And you don't allow any person to be healed. These people were so selfish.

Jesus said in verse 11 of Matthew 12, if one of your sheep falls into a pit, won't you pull it out on the Sabbath day or will you leave it there till Sunday morning or Saturday night? No, even if it's on the Sabbath day, he'll pull it out immediately. He says, your fellows are so selfish and don't you think this man who's got a withered hand is much better than a sheep? So you find that legalistic people are very narrow-minded in their approach. They are very, very selfish.

They do things for themselves, but they'll never allow it for another person. Further, in verse chapter 12, verse 31 and 32, Jesus spoke about blasphemy. When they said that he was casting out demons, verse 27, by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, Jesus said, have you spoken against me? Verse 32, it's forgiven.

In the Old Testament, when Miriam spoke against Moses, she got leprosy. Who is greater, Moses or Jesus? Jesus. Now listen to this.

Miriam said a small word against Moses. Why did you marry that wife? She got leprosy. The Pharisees said such a strong word against Jesus.

You are led by the prince of devils. What did they get? Forgiveness. Miriam got leprosy and the Pharisees got forgiveness.

That is the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. The blood of Abel cries out for judgment. The blood of Jesus cries out for mercy.

If you wish that God will judge those who hurt you, you are still a Jew under the Old Covenant. If you desire that God will forgive those who hurt you, then you have become a Christian, a disciple of Jesus Christ. Chapter 36 and 37, he speaks about the words that come out of our mouth.

Every careless word that men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment. Now it is my firm conviction, after being a believer for more than 40 years and watching believers in many parts of the world, that more than 95% of believers that I have met do not believe that verse. They do not believe that they will have to give an account to God one day for every useless word that they ever spoke in their lives.

How do I know that? Because they speak such a lot of useless words so carelessly. They speak evil of others, they gossip, they backbite, they crack filthy jokes, they laugh at filthy jokes, they do so many things

like this. They hurt other people, sometimes, you know, humor is good.

I believe in humor with all my heart, but humor that hurts other people is never godly. You may get a reputation for humor by saying something that hurts other people, but it's not Christ-like. That's an idle word for which you'll have to give an account in the day of judgment.

But I don't believe that most people believe that God has got a record of every word we have ever spoken. I believe it with all my heart, it's recorded in our memory. There's a videotape running in our memory all the time, recording everything that's happened in my life from the day we were born.

It's like these memory chips in computers. Computers actually are, you know, patterned after the human brain, and in the human brain is the original computer, and it can store a fantastic amount of information, more than any computer on the earth. And in that computer, called the human brain, is a memory which contains every single thing you ever did from the day you were born, every word that you spoke.

It's all stored there like in a computer, and in the day of judgment, God just pulls up the screen and brings out everything from the day you were born, every word that you ever spoke. Every human being is born with this computer, and when he's raised from the dead, that computer will be back running in the day of judgment to reveal exactly what he said throughout his life. And it's all there.

Every word you spoke from the time you said mama is recorded in your computer brain. And it's all there. Be careful.

If you believe God's word, you'll be careful with your speech. And in that day, this is an amazing verse, all of us know about justification by faith. If you're a balanced Christian, you will also know about justification by works.

Faith without works is dead. Romans 4 speaks about justification by faith, which is scripture. James chapter 2 speaks about justification by the works of faith, which is also scripture.

And Jesus, in verse 37, spoke about justification by our words. Now, if on the day of judgment, the words you spoke are played back from the computer, would they justify you or condemn you? It's a very good question. In the new covenant, we are to have a tongue of fire.

You know, on the day of Pentecost, a tongue of fire came on people's heads, a tongue under the control of the Holy Spirit. I'm sorry to say that a lot of people have mistaken that to only speaking in unknown tongues. No.

I keep saying no. It is a tongue under the control of the Holy Spirit throughout the day. That is the tongue I want.

That is the tongues that I want to speak. In addition to other languages, that's a gift. But not just that, I don't want to speak in unknown tongues and not have a tongue under the control of the Holy Spirit the whole day.

This is the tongue of fire, by your words. In the old covenant, it was not there because they didn't have the Holy Spirit to control their tongue. God permitted a lot of things under the old covenant, but not in the new.

Just like he permitted divorce and marrying 10 wives in the old covenant, but not today. It wasn't his will even in the old covenant, but he permitted it. But today we have more life.

Matthew chapter 12, verse 40, it speaks about Jonah in the whale's belly, in the sea monster's belly for three days and three nights, and Saul, verse 40, son of man be in the heart of the earth. That means not in the grave. He was in the center of the earth.

Paradise was located in the center of the earth at that time. Today it's in heaven. Jesus went to the center of the earth with the dying feet, with the dead feet, to paradise.

And he was there for three days and three nights. It's my conviction that Jesus Christ died on a Thursday, not on a Friday. He died on Thursday afternoon at three o'clock.

Friday was the feast of unleavened bread, a special Sabbath as we read in John 19. And Saturday was the regular Sabbath of the weekly Sabbath. So there were two Sabbaths, and that's why the women came on the Sunday morning to anoint him with spices and discovered that he had risen.

He spent three days and three nights dead in the heart of the earth, exactly like Jonah was. There's no mistaking scripture. A lot of the traditions that Christianity has got are not based on scripture.

For example, that Christ died on a Friday. Chapter 13, we read of the seven parables that Jesus spoke here. One is the parable of the sower.

We can look at it in another gospel. The other, verse 24 to 30, these are parables of the kingdom of heaven. And notice here that Jesus speaks of the kingdom of heaven in its outward expression.

That means in the way that other people see the church. And that's why he said the kingdom of heaven, there are people with four types of ground. And then he said the kingdom of heaven is like seed sown in a field and there are tares also in that field.

And then he explained it later on and said to them that the field, verse 38, is the world. The field is not the church. You know, there are some people who misquote this parable and say, well, Jesus said that in the church there will be wheat and tares and we should not separate them.

So naturally we have to sit in a church where there are unconverted people and converted people. That's because they haven't read the scriptures. The scripture does not say the field is the world, the church.

The scripture says in verse 38, the field is the world. In the world, there will be believers and unbelievers, which is true. But in the church, we have to make sure that the church, as far as we know, comprises of those who are born again by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

The others are welcome to come and sit and listen to the meetings, but it must be made clear to them that you are not part of the local church until you're born again. Any person can come and sit in the meetings and by church, I don't mean a building, I mean the body of Jesus Christ. So that's one thing I want to say about the tares and the other thing is verse 31 to 32 about the mustard seed, small mustard seed that's planted, that grows up and becomes the greatest of all plants.

That's not the way God intended the church to grow. God intended the church, local churches, to be small little groups meeting here and there. But when people make it much bigger than God intended it to be, it gathers in.

What happens is you lower the standards and you gather in a whole lot of people who are not disciples. And when you increase your church without preaching discipleship, this thing which was meant to be a

small tree becomes larger than everything else and then what happens? It says in verse 32, 1332, the birds of the air which Jesus said in an earlier parable were the demons. The demons come and sit inside the church.

Who caused that problem? You yourself. If you had preached discipleship, your church would not have been so big and you wouldn't have problems with those demons. And that's the point here.

Verse 33, he spoke about the kingdom of heaven again being like leaven. It's the outward expression, corruption, spreading. Again and again he speaks about that.

Different types of ground, tears, the demons coming and sitting inside the church and leaven. If only Christianity had paid attention to these parables, they'd have been very, very careful to preach discipleship. And then the hidden treasure, the kingdom of heaven is like a man who found a field with treasure hidden and this is discipleship.

These two parables speak about discipleship. He sold everything that he had and he got that. He says, I want to pay the total price.

I want to give up everything and follow Jesus. I want this kingdom. They got it.

The man who searched for goodly pearls, teaching the same lesson, he sold all that he had. Notice that expression, all that he had. No man of you can be my disciple unless he forsakes all that he has.

That means everything that he has, he's given to Jesus. Then you can get God's kingdom. Otherwise you'll get that compromised version that you've seen before.

Again in verse 47, he speaks about the kingdom having two types of fish. They both come in. The good and the bad.

And then at the end of the age, angels come and take out the wicked from the righteous. Verse 49. One last word.

Verse 52. That's a good word for those who are Bible students. A scribe must become a disciple.

A scribe is a scholar who studies, studies, studies, studies, studies, studies, studies, studies, studies the scriptures. It says the scribe must become a disciple. Then, when he gets up to preach, from his treasure, he will bring out things, old things which are still fresh, and new things which are fresh.

But not if you're a disciple. If you remain a scribe, your ministry will be dead. Chapter 14, we read in verses 29 to 31, a demonstration of faith.

Peter walking on the water. Jesus walking on the water. Peter walking on the water.

And I ask people this question. Which is the greater miracle? Jesus walking on the water, or Peter walking on the water? It's Peter walking on the water. Jesus walking on the water is not a great miracle.

But Peter walking on the water, where everybody sinks, that's a real miracle. Okay. What is this trying to teach us? What is it that prevents us from walking on water? The law of gravity that pulls us down.

When you try to walk on water, the law of gravity pulls you down. The law of gravity pulled Jesus down also. But by the power of God, he overcame it, and he walked on water.

And he told Peter, if you look at me and trust me, this law of gravity will not operate. It will be there. In fact, a few moments later, Peter discovered it was there, because it pulled him down.

But as long as you look at me, you'll be able to overcome it. He's not destroying the law of gravity, he's overcoming it, as you look at Jesus. What is the spiritual message? Jesus overcame sin.

There's a law like the law of gravity called the law of sin. It keeps on pulling us down. It tried to pull Jesus too.

Jesus was tempted, we read in Matthew 4. But he overcame it, and he did not sink. And he says to you, like he said to Peter, you can overcome that law also. But only if you look at me.

If you look at my example, if you look at the example of Moses who got angry and Jeremiah who got depressed, you will not overcome. But if you look at me, you can overcome exactly like I overcame. That's the message in Revelation 3.21. Overcome as I overcame.

Very clear. And then you can sit with me on my throne, as I have sat with my father on his throne. So the message here is, you can overcome as I overcame, if you look at me.

And if you look at me and my word and not look at other Christians and the substandard level at which they live. And as long as Peter looked at Jesus, that is faith. Faith is to look at Jesus.

He walked. He overcame. And you can overcome the law of sin by the supernatural power of God called grace.

Sin shall not have dominion over you. But the moment he looked away, down. And when you go down, what should you do? Don't wait till you hit the bottom of the sea.

When did Peter say, Lord, save me? It says, as soon as he was beginning to sink, I think even his feet had not gone fully down. He felt, hey, I'm sinking, Lord, save me. And when you're sinking in temptation, you know what you should do? Cry out to Jesus and say, Lord, I'm falling now.

I'm falling in lust. I'm falling in anger. I'm falling.

I'm falling. Please save me. And he will stretch out his hand and make you stand.

He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. Chapter 15, I want to show you one verse. Verse 13, Jesus said, every plant which my heavenly father did not plant will be rooted up.

The question is not whether it is a good plant. The question is not whether it's a big plant. The question is not whether other people appreciate the plant.

The question is who planted it, you or God? We've got a lot of bright ideas to do God's work, okay? You go ahead with your bright ideas, and you can do something. You can produce something, which looks very impressive in the eyes of men. But in the final day, the Lord will check up to see, is this an idea that originated in your own brain, or is it an idea that originated with God? God, listen to this statement carefully, God is the only legitimate originator of anything in this universe.

I believe that. He is the only legitimate originator of anything in this universe. If you originate something, it will perish.

What's the first words in the Bible? In the beginning, God. Let it be like that in your life. What does it mean in practical terms? You can't decide to go somewhere and say, I'm going to serve God over there.

Where did that idea originate? Was it in your heart? Was it in somebody else's heart, who stirred you to go to some place to serve the Lord? Or did you wait upon the Lord, and the Lord put a burden in your heart? Then go ahead and do it. Are you trying to build a church somewhere, because you want to do something, like you saw somebody else do? It won't work. You can try, you can try a hundred years, it won't work.

You can gather people, in a country like India, you can gather people anywhere. It's very easy, because there are so many poor people, who need so many other benefits by coming to the church. In every church, many poor people come in, because of other attractions.

Not because they want to be disciples of Jesus Christ, not because they want to give up their life and deny themselves, and hate money, and hate sin, and overcome sin, and apologize. Not at all. I have been enough in India to know the truth.

And don't shut your eyes to these realities. If you just want to gather a few people, you can gather them anywhere in this country. Because you've got more money than them.

And people go with money, and build a church, and they can gather someone. The apostles didn't go like that. Paul was not a rich person like you.

So the question is, has God led you to that? Did you wait on the Lord? Did God lead you, or are you doing something for your own honor? Perhaps you won't listen to me, but in the day of judgment, you'll wish you had, so that you don't waste your life. It's better to humble yourself today, and say, Lord, I don't want anything that did not originate with you, because it says in this verse, one day it will be pulled out. And it's going to happen.

A lot of things are pulled out on this earth itself. Some things will definitely be pulled out when Christ comes again. So what is the answer? Wait on the Lord.

Don't be in a rush. He who believes will not make haste. That's the King James Version of Isaiah 28, 16.

He who believes will not make haste. Do you see a man, Proverbs 29, what's that verse? One of the 20s there, Proverbs 29. Do you see a man who's hasty in his matters? There's more hope for a fool than for him.

Wait on the Lord. Wait on the Lord. Let God put an idea into your mind, and make sure that you're not seeking your own glory, and you're not depending on your own power.

That plant will remain forever. Don't ever try to serve the Lord without waiting on Him, without seeking His advice. Don't depend on your own ability.

Chapter 16, verse 6. Jesus spoke about the 11 of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. We can look at that in another chapter, another gospel. Verse 16 to 26, He speaks to Simon.

Simon said to Him when He asked, Who am I? He said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And here's another place where Jesus praised Simon Peter publicly and said, Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, son of Jonah, because you did not understand this with your human intelligence or cleverness. My father revealed.

Notice that word, reveal. It's a New Testament word, revelation, reveal, revelation. You don't find that in the Old Testament.

In the Old Testament, it was just study. Study the law. But in the New Testament, it's not study.

It's not even meditate. It's more than meditate. The best in the Old Testament was Psalm 1. Blessed is the man who meditates on the law of the Lord.

But when you come to the New Testament, the word is not even meditate. The word is revelation. Paul says in Ephesians 1, verse 17 onwards, I pray that your eyes of your understanding will be open, that God will give you the spirit of revelation.

What Peter got here was revelation. The Holy Spirit opening his eyes of his heart to see something which he could never discover with any amount of human intelligence, because there were cleverer people than him who had studied the Bible much more than him in Israel at that time, and they couldn't understand it. And Peter understood it.

Please remember that for today. God can reveal all of Scripture to us if you come to him like a little babe in humility and brokenness. And verse 18, I say to you, you are Peter, Petros, a small stone.

But upon this rock, Petra, a large rock, on this rock of revelation of Christ as the Son of the living God, I will build my church. Many people have misunderstood that. Jesus was not saying, Peter, you are the rock.

He was contrasting it. He used two completely different words which don't come through in the English so clearly. You are Petros, a small stone, but on this Petra, this word that you just spoke, this rock of Christ the Son of the living God, verse 16, on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

What picture do you get when you read verse 18? This is the first time Jesus spoke about the church, and he said it's built on him, Christ the Son of the living God, and he also spoke about warfare. The church is always involved in warfare. Now what do you understand by the gates of Hades not prevailing against it? I'll tell you how I understood it for many years.

I understood it like this. The church is in a battle, and the devil is attacking the church on all four sides, and we are somehow surviving and holding out till the Lord comes. But as I thought about that verse a little more, I said that's not true.

It's not the gates of the church that the devil is attacking and saying the devil will not be able to overcome the gates of the church. It's the gates of Hades. It's the church attacking the gates of Hades.

You know, in those days, a city was surrounded with walls, and it had gates, and if you got through the gates, you got into the city. So this is not a picture of the church somehow surviving when the devil is attacking the gates of the church. It's the church attacking the gates of Hades.

It's a completely different picture. It's not a defensive battle. It's an attacking battle where we go against Satan.

We go against the fortresses of Satan in India. We don't sit in our corner and say, oh, we'll protect ourselves. You know that song which I never like to sing, and I never do sing when other people sing it?

Hold the fort, for I'm coming, says the Lord.

That gives the picture the church is somehow struggling inside this fort, and the devil is attacking it on all sides, and I somehow got to survive. It's not like that. I'm not inside any fort.

It's the devil who's inside some fort, and we are attacking him, and he better cry out and ask somebody to help him, but he's got nobody to help him. That's the picture you must always keep in your mind, a triumphant church that's attacking the devil, and yet the vast majority of Christians in our country have got this defeatist attitude, always defensive, defensive, defensive, somehow survive, and you hear some voice from heaven saying, Jesus saying, hold the fort, I'm coming, I'm coming, hold on. I don't hear any voice like that.

We walk like Jesus walked on the earth. Wherever Jesus walked, the demons trembled, and the devil got scared, and wherever you and I walk, every place that the sole of your foot shall tread, I give unto you. We don't live in fear.

We don't live in fear, oh, the devil will give me cancer, or the devil will give me a road accident, or the devil will give me this. No, he's got to be scared of me. Do you have that view, my brother or sister? You can never build the church of Jesus Christ if you don't take that attitude towards Satan.

The gates of hell will not prevail when you go against it. You go, and Jesus has bound the strong man already. We go and spoil the strong man's goods.

It's not the strong man coming and attacking us. That's not the picture anywhere in the Bible, and the devil has been so clever to put a completely opposite view in the minds of so many believers. Okay, and after that, Jesus spoke about taking up the cross.

We can look at that in another gospel. Chapter 17, we read in verse, it's about the transfiguration also. We can look at when we go into another chapter.

Let's go to chapter 18, when we go to another gospel, rather. Chapter 18, verse 3, Jesus said, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. Now, is it true that you cannot enter God's kingdom unless you're converted and become like a little child? Absolutely right.

A little child, he's speaking about humility. Whoever humbles himself like this child. In other words, Jesus was saying humility is the fundamental requirement for entering God's kingdom.

I've often told people there are three secrets of living a godly Christian life. You know what those three secrets are? Number one, humility. Number two, humility.

Number three, humility. Okay, you got it. You got the three secrets of the Christian life.

You'll have no more problem if you keep these three secrets before you all your life. That's all. That's it.

Become like a little child, humble yourself, and say, Lord, I'm not the clever, smart man that I try to tell people in the world I am. I'm pretty dumb when it comes to spiritual things. I really don't know.

You know, we are so self-confident. Little babies are not self-confident. They are so scared.

Have you seen a little baby? You try and take a six-month-old baby from its mother's arms, in a few moments it'll start crying. It's so scared. It's secure in its mother's arms.

It's helpless. And the Lord says, just as much as you're bold before the devil, be like a helpless babe before God. This is the dual picture of the Christian.

A warrior in front of the gates of hell, fearless, but before God, like a little child. Lord, I cling to you. And because I cling to you, I'm safe.

I don't know anything. I may do a lot of stupid things. Please protect me.

I don't understand your word. I'm a little child. I don't know ABC.

You know, a little child doesn't come into the world knowing ABCD. It has to learn. Keep that attitude of being a little child all your life.

In verses 18 to 20, he speaks of the authority of the church that can bind and loose Satan. It's the second time he spoke about the church. But it requires at least two or three people who are united.

Verse 19, two or three people must be united. And when they are united, Jesus says, I'm in their midst, verse 20. And then verse 18, when they bind Satan, Satan will be bound.

Many people try to do that without being united with others. We've got to be united in spirit. A family can be united and bind Satan's power in their home.

But it is that unity which the new covenant speaks of primarily. Chapter, verse 21 to 35, speaks about the unmerciful servant who did not forgive somebody else. And Jesus said, here he speaks about this truth of being unforgiven.

Unforgiveness. Not just unforgiveness, but being forgiven and being unforgiven. That means your sins were forgiven.

And then the Lord cancels that forgiveness and say, sorry, you're not forgiven. That's the message of the story. This king forgave that slave, but when that slave did not forgive his fellow slave, he canceled his forgiveness.

Sorry, you got to pay up. And Jesus said, so will my heavenly father do to you. Verse 35, if you don't forgive other people, that means even though your sins may be forgiven today, all your sins from the day you were born because you came to Jesus tomorrow, if you go and don't forgive somebody else, all the sins from the time you were born till today will be put back to your account.

If you can get any other interpretation of that parable, tell me, there is no other interpretation. All your sins will be put back to your account if you don't forgive somebody else. And you'll go right on to hell.

In chapter 20, verse 1, Jesus onward, Jesus spoke about laborers who came to work in the 11th hour. That parable teaches us that those who serve the Lord for reward, like those who came in the third hour and fifth hour and sixth hour and so on, will get their reward last. And those who came at the 11th hour expecting nothing, who serve the Lord out of joy, they're going to get their reward first.

Remember that. It's motive that matters. In chapter 23, Jesus spoke about the Pharisees and all the qualities of the Pharisees which led him to condemn them so severely.

Do you know that the Pharisees had a missionary program? It says in verse 15, many of them are full-time workers. They gave up their jobs. They've crossed land and sea.

They had foreign missionary program. And when they went to these foreign lands, giving up their jobs, being full-time workers, and I'm sure they had a missionary board behind them, supporting them, converting. They were converting people out there.

Jesus said, you're just converting people to take them to hell. So don't think that everybody who's got a missionary program is doing God's work. Not necessarily.

It's a question of whether you're preaching discipleship. Do you go there and make disciples or do you go there and make legalistic Pharisees who are externally following certain rules and regulations? It's very easy to do missionary work like that. And it's much easier to get people to change externally and follow a certain form.

Like one place I visited in North Karnataka once where the villagers had been converted years ago by some mission. And they were still singing the same old Hindu songs, except instead of saying Krishna, they were saying Krista. That is the only difference.

Everything else, they were still drinking and doing everything, just like they did before, but it was Krista now. So it's very easy to change the external form. To lead a people to discipleship is our calling.

Let's move on now. Some of these other passages about the coming of the Lord and all we can look at in other Gospels. Chapter 28, verse 18 to 20.

It's the Great Commission. The basis of the Great Commission, verse 18, is that all authority in heaven and earth has been given to Jesus Christ. You should not go out to make disciples on any other basis.

It's not because there's a need. It's not because I feel like going. It's not because I've got nothing else to do.

It's not because somebody else tells me to go. It's because Jesus Christ has got all authority in heaven and earth. And he tells me to go.

And go and do what? In every nation, in every place I go, if you want to do God's work, make disciples. Don't just make converts. Don't just change their external form and make them say the right words.

Make disciples, followers of Jesus, baptize them. Baptism is not an optional thing. We are not interdenominational and say, okay, we'll keep quiet on baptism.

I'm not anyway. If I go to make disciples, after making disciples, I've got to baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And then I have to, after that, build the church, build them into a body by teaching them to do every single thing that Jesus commanded.

It's very clear the Great Commission. Go, number one, two, make disciples, three, baptize them, four, spend the rest of the time teaching them to obey every single thing that I ever did. And this Great Commission is surrounded by two promises like brackets.

No, two statements. One, all authority in heaven and earth is given to me. And at the end, I'm with you always to the end of the age.

And anyone, don't claim that promise that the Lord is with you. Everybody likes to claim that promise. Lord, I am with you always.

To whom was it given? Only to those who are going and making disciples. Not believers who are living somewhere trying to make money. They can't claim that promise.

Go and make disciples, and then you can claim the promise that he's with you always, otherwise he isn't. Our calling in life is to make disciples. Let's pray.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/WI7omPxAQJc.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/through-the-bible-matthew-part-2/>

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