

# Jesus the Great Teacher

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 26 February 2017

Preacher: Samir Massouh

[0:00] I want you to turn in your Bibles to the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 11. We are going to look at two very important events, two important chapters in the Gospel.

This chapter, Chapter 11, is probably the most controversial chapter in all of the New Testament. There are, Jesus says many fantastic things in many fantastic places, but I suspect that this is the most controversial passage in all of the New Testament.

So we're going to take a look at it carefully. In your bulletin at the back, I gave you an outline of what I'm going to cover, what we're going to look at, and I want you to follow it carefully.

Okay? So please keep the back of the bulletin, the outline near you, and the Bible near you. We're going to look first at Chapter 11 to understand what Jesus is saying.

Then we will look at Chapter 12 to help you see concretely, explicitly, specifically, in real life, what Jesus has been talking about.

[1:13] So we're going to hear it as a conversation, and then we are going to see it with our own eyes. Let's begin with verse 25. 25 and 26.

At that time, Jesus said, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children, including the parents of the little children who were lined up here just a second ago.

You have hidden these things from the wise and the learned, and revealed them to little children.

Yes, Father, this was your good pleasure. In many ways, this summarizes Jesus' ministry.

Ever since Jesus started to teach, there have been two groups. There have been two groups. On one hand, the ordinary, average, common people, farmers, fishermen, carpenters, who have listened to him, who have followed him, who have heard him teach, both at the Sermon on the Mount and in small houses, and they have accepted Jesus.

They have come with receptive hearts, willing to be learned, and the Father has revealed the truth to them. But on the other hand, we have the Pharisees and the hypocrites, and they have constantly resisted Jesus.

[2:44] They have questioned his motives. They have doubted that his authority. They have not accepted his instructions. They have accused him of being a blasphemer. Who is this guy who thinks that he can forgive sins, for example?

And so Jesus has been with these two groups, those who accept him, receive him, and are with him, and those who reject him, resist him, challenge his authority.

And so you have the followers of Jesus and the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. And these are the two groups that Jesus is thinking about.

Jesus knows what has been happening to him. The disciples follow him. The Pharisees constantly criticize. And he knows why that's happening.

This leads us to verse 27. This extremely controversial and startling verse. Jesus says, Jesus says, I'm not making it up.

[4:06] It is written here. No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

This is not a normal sentence. This is not like, let's have pizza after church. This is not, do you want to watch the Oscars tonight? Jesus is making a bold, brave, incredibly exclusivistic, fantastic statements.

No one knows the Father except the Son. I want you to sense how that statement feels. What if I, don't believe the word I'm going to tell you, but what if I say to you, I am the only one in all of

America who understands football.

Look at your feelings. Stretch the feelings. If I tell you, I am the only one in all of America who knows football, at minimum, you should say, what about other great coaches in history?

Did Lombardi know nothing about football? How about Mike Ditka, the Chicago Bears, the Super Bowl, that fantastic defense, he didn't know anything about football?

[5:36] Bill Walsh, and the West Coast offense, which was installed in Green Bay with great results. How about Bilicek?

Five Super Bowls, and he doesn't know anything about football? If I said, no, they don't, I'm the only one, you're going to say, boy, Samir is really conceited.

I mean, he is at the verge of being crazy. He is the only one? Who does he think he is? But look, this is what Jesus is doing.

He is saying, nobody knows the Father except me. And we're tempted to say, nobody? How about Plato and Aristotle?

Don't they know anything about God? How about Confucius and Buddha? How about the Persian prophet, Zarathustra?

[6:38] What about the Muslim prophet, Muhammad? Our postmodern culture says, there are no absolutes. The truth is what you want it to be.

And Jesus would say, nobody knows the Father except me. Emphatically. Not Buddha, not Muhammad, not Plato, not Aristotle, not Confucius, not Immanuel Kant.

David Hume, only Jesus knows the Father. You can't ignore a statement like that.

This is too. This is like a bolt. This is like a thunder from heaven. Only Jesus knows the Father. You can't ignore it. You can't ignore it. You can't pretend it wasn't said.

You can't think it's nothing. You have got to ask yourself, what kind of people make these kinds of statements? When somebody says, when somebody says, I am the only one, exclusively, what kind of person is that?

[7:41] And CS Lewis says, you have three choices. Number one, he is a lunatic, and he is a lunatic, and he is a lunatic. He is a lunatic, and he is a lunatic. He is a lunatic, and he is a lunatic.

He is a lunatic. He is a liar. He is saying, I'm the only one who's watching this. He's saying, I'm the only one who's watching this. He says, you have three choices. You have three choices.

Number one, he is a lunatic. He should be in psychiatric ward. He has these delusions about himself.

He's a megalomaniac, who thinks he's better than everybody. He is a lunatic, or he is a liar. He's saying, I'm the only one, but others do know.

And he is lying by telling us that he is exclusively the only one who knows the Father. So Jesus is either lunatic or liar or Lord.

[8:38] You've got those three choices. Is the one who is calming the sea and walking on water? Is the one who is feeding the 5,000 and teaching the multitudes?

Is that a lunatic? Is that a liar? I have and had come to grips with that. I remember it very well. Senior year in college at the University of California. I had to decide, is he lunatic, liar, or Lord? And for me, Jesus is Lord.

And you have to make that same decision. If you have already made it, thank God that Jesus is your Lord. If you haven't, you can't avoid this sentence.

It's attention-grabbing. It demands a response. And so you have to ask yourself, what do I think of Jesus? Jesus says, I am it.

[9:47] That's it. No one knows the Father except the Son. And those to whom the Son chooses to reveal himself. And of course, he revealed himself to the 12 disciples, to the early church, to the great reformers, throughout all of church history.

And we stand in a great tradition of those who came before us to whom God had revealed the Father. We are part of that great heritage, that great movement of those of us who have benefited because God in his generosity revealed himself to us through the Son, through the Holy Spirit.

And that's what we're doing. So, we come to verse 28. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

This verse is packed with so many things. So, let's take it one by one. He says, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Why should we come to Jesus?

[11:14] Because he knows the Father, and he can reveal him. What's the point of going to the long person? Look, if you want to know something about biology, you don't ask me.

I know zilch about biology. If you want to know something about languages, I know languages, but I don't know anything about biology. Jesus knows the Father.

So, if you want to know something about the Father, you go to the right teacher. You don't go to a music conservatory to learn engineering. They don't teach engineering in music conservatories.

You go to an engineering school. Jesus says, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened. There are lots of things in life that make us weary and burdened.

Being unemployed makes you weary and burdened. Having a job in which you don't make enough money makes you weary and burdened. Having family problems that could end up in a divorce, that will add burden and weaviness to your life.

[12:29] Health problems. As you know, my best friend had health problems for 18 months before he died of cancer. That put burden and weaviness on the family.

Natural disasters. If I lived in California and my house was being flooded by flooding, I'd be weary and burdened. If there are earthquakes, fires in Southern California, you become weary and burdened.

There are all kinds of things in life that make us weary and burdened. Life is not a picnic. If you think, the only way to think that life is a picnic is to take LSD, and I wouldn't recommend it.

It's not good for you. It will fry your brains. Life is not a picnic. It's filled with burdens.

What should we do when we have burdens? I want you to hear me carefully. Look at the back of your bulletin.

[13:38] Look at the top two verses. I put those verses on purpose because I don't want you to miss the point. When we have burdens, when we have troubles, when we have difficulties, what should we do?

The Bible says, cast your anxieties on him because he cares for you. You have financial problems, you come to Jesus.

You have emotional problems, you come to Jesus. You have psychological problems, you come to Jesus. You have family problems, you come to Jesus. You have educational problems, you come to Jesus.

And why do we come to Jesus? Cast your anxieties on him because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5.7 The book of Psalms is filled with psalms of lament.

Psalms 62. If you are having problems at the present, the best thing I can tell you is begin by reading Psalm 62. Psalm 62 is the most emphatic of all the psalms.

[14:48] Of all the psalms. Of all 150. This is the one that is most emphatic in saying that God is our fortress. Our refuge.

Our shelter. Our hope in time of trouble. O people, pour out your hearts before him. What should I do when I have burdens?

I should cast my anxieties on him. I should come to him. I should pour out my heart to him. That is what I should do. So, whatever I'm saying next does not contradict this.

I want you to see this emphatically. This is what we do. But Jesus says in verse 28, come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. There are two important words there. Rest and yoke. What do these mean?

[15:47] Jesus is quoting from two different passages. The invitation to have rest, to find rest is from Jeremiah chapter 6, verse 16.

God is saying there are two ways. A way that leads to life and a way that leads to destruction. I am setting before you two options.

You can either take this path and obey me and walk in my ways and follow me and you will find rest. If you don't, you will find destruction.

So, Jesus is saying take the path that I am setting before you and you will find rest. So, he is quoting Jeremiah 6, verse 16.

But what is yoke? Yoke is a very, very common rabbinic word. Rabbis talked about yoke all the time.

[16:46] Yoke of the Torah. They usually talked about the yoke of the Torah. The yoke of the Torah literally means the teaching of the law. So, there was constant discussion of what the law teaches.

The yoke of the prophet is the teaching of the prophets. The yoke of wisdom is the teaching of wisdom. The yoke of the Torah is the teaching of the Torah. There is a very important, popular, famous, very well-known among rabbis book that is not part of the Old Testament.

It was written between the Old Testament and the New. It's intertestamental. That book was written by a man called Yeshua ben Ali Azar ben Sirach.

And in it, he summarizes the wisdom of the Old Testament. It's a great book about wisdom.

And at the end of the book, in chapter 51, verse 27, he invites the nation to take on the yoke of wisdom. In Judaism, if you were a Gentile and wanted to be converted to Judaism, you went through initiation.

[18:04] The last question that you are asked is, do you accept the yoke of the Torah? And if you said yes, you became a Jew. If you said no, you are not.

Yoke means teaching. Yoke means teaching. Even if you had never heard of ben Sirach, you could see it for yourself.

Look at verse 29. Look at verse 29. Take my yoke upon you and, what's the next verb?

Learn. Yoke has something to do with learning. So, the teacher teaches you and you're supposed to learn.

Jesus is saying, come to me and learn from me. Why should we learn from Jesus? Because he knows the Father and others don't.

[19:06] But why else should we learn from Jesus? Because my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Yoke means learning, but it also means obeying what it is that you're learning.

Don't just be hearers of the word, but doers. James says that. That's the yoke of the Torah. So, let me help you understand the yoke of the Torah.

I'll give you the most famous case. One of the two most famous cases in all of the Old Testament.

In the book of Deuteronomy, in the section about what to eat and what not to eat, kosher and non-kosher food, in Deuteronomy chapter 14, verse 21, there is this interesting statement, don't cook or don't boil a small goat with its mother's milk.

So, when I go to the market and buy a pound of ground burger, I should go to the manager and I said, I bought this meat and I bought this milk.

Is this milk and this meat related? Is this the small goat in the mother's milk? How on earth would they know that? But the Torah says, don't boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

[20:30] Rabbi said, why should we boil? Why do we boil? Well, we boil to eat. So, the commandment was expanded now to say, don't boil and don't eat meat with its mother's milk.

So, I go have dinner, I have meat. When can I drink milk again? I want to keep this commandment. When can I drink milk?

Well, it depends on the opinion of my teacher that I'm studying with. So, some rabbi said, you wait six hours. Six hours.

This is to make sure that the milk and the meat are not in your digestive system at the same time.

Other rabbis said, no. Just wait one hour.

Other rabbis said, eat meat, then recite a benediction, and then fold what's on the table, and then you can drink milk.

[21:43] That probably takes ten minutes. Another school said, you should never, never eat cheeseburger, because the burger is a meat product, and the cheese is a milk product.

So, I'm being told, never eat cheeseburgers, or wait six hours, or wait one hour, or wait ten minutes.

Fold the tablecloth, and then, what should I do? I should follow whoever is my teacher whom I believe. And Jesus is saying, follow me. Follow my teachings. Why? Because my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. I should follow Jesus' teaching.

These other teachers are trying to help me. They don't want me to disobey the commandment, but they're giving me instructions, interpretations, that they think are helpful, but may be helpful, but then may not be helpful at all.

[22:57] And it so happens, that in rabbinic circle, the more difficult the interpretation, it became the one that is most accepted. So, if somebody gives you an easy way out, and the hard way out, guess what you do?

You go the hard way out. Wait six hours. Jesus is saying, come to me.

I know the Father. My yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Now, what I want to do, is to look at Matthew chapter 12.

The first eight verses, and I want you very quickly to see, what he has been talking about in chapter 11. So, in chapter 12, at that time, Jesus went through the grain field, on the Sabbath.

His disciples were hungry, and he began to pick some heads, they began to pick some heads of grain, and eat them. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, look, your disciples are doing what is unlawful, on the Sabbath.

[24:10] Chapter 25 says, what? There are two groups, and guess who shows up now? The two groups. This is going to happen, until the end of the gospel.

The Pharisees are going to constantly question, Jesus' authority. So, here are the two groups, those who accept Jesus' teaching, and those who constantly oppose him.

So, just as we have the two groups in verse 25, we have the two groups in verses 1 and 2. Jesus says, he knows the Father, and he can reveal him, to whomever he wants to.

Jesus responds to the objections of the Pharisees, by giving them an example from the priests, and an example from David. And then, he reveals the Father.

So, when we read chapter 12, the first eight verses, look at, especially, verse 7. What is Jesus going to reveal to us, in verse 7?

[25:21] If you had known, what these words mean, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, you wouldn't have condemned the innocent.

What does Jesus know, about the Father? He knows, that the Father desires mercy, and not sacrifice. This should sound familiar, because Mike covered that, just very recently.

This is the second time, in the Gospel of Matthew, where Jesus quotes these words, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice. And that is a quotation, from the Gospel, from the Prophet Hosea, 6.6.

Jesus is saying, if you come before my Father, and on one hand, you all want to offer sacrifices, and on the other hand, you want to do acts of mercy, guess what he wants?

He wants mercy, not sacrifices. I want you to see that, in the light of the easy yoke, and in the light of this passage. Look at verse 1, in chapter 12 again.

[26:31] At that time, Jesus went through the grain fields, on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry, and began to pick, some heads of grain, and eat them. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, look, your disciples are doing, what is unlawful, on the Sabbath.

Should the disciples, pick grain, and eat, or should they not? The Pharisees says, no, they should not.

They could go hungry. And Jesus says, go ahead, pick, because you are hungry. Which is more merciful thing, to say to a hungry man?

Eat, or don't eat? What does the father want? He wants mercy, not sacrifice. Which is easier? Which is more merciful thing, to do?

To eat, or not to eat? Jesus says, his burden, his yoke is easy, and his burden is light. Which is an easier commandment, to obey?

[27:37] Which is an easier commandment, to obey? To go hungry, or to eat? Which teaching is lighter?

Which teaching is heavier? And Jesus says, my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Why should we come to Jesus?

Because he knows the father, and because his yoke, his commandment, his teaching, is easy, and not light. How does all this, apply to us?

It applies to us, in two ways. Number one, you must, ask yourself, who is this Jesus? Is he lunatic? Is he liar? Or is he lord? You can't just put it off. You can't pretend, it doesn't exist. You can't say, that Jesus didn't say this. Jesus said it, and says other things as well.

[28:43] He who has seen me, has seen the father, the father and I are one. Jesus has said these. You can't ignore it. You might as well face it, and make up your mind, once and for all.

Are you going to follow Jesus, or are you going to ignore him? You can't say he's lunatic. You can't say he is liar, he is neither. He is lord.

Are you going to face it? The second thing is that, if you're going to understand God, go to someone who knows God.

Jesus says, come to me. Come to me. There are all kinds of crazy sects out there.

I'm a child of the 60s. I saw it all. People thought that they could find truth in drugs, in sex.

[29:42] I majored in philosophy. Others lived in communes. Jesus is saying, don't waste your life going everywhere. Come to me.

Come to me. So we have to say to our culture, there are absolutes. Jesus is not just one option of ten options.

He is the only option. And that's where we stand. Let's have a word of prayer. Lord, Father, thank you, Father, that you are not distant and remote.

You have revealed yourself and you allow Jesus to reveal you to us. Thank you that you're a God who is near and not just far away.

Thank you. Thank you because obeying you and walking in your way is easy and not hard. And thank you because you want us to come to you.

[30:53] We are so blessed and touched by your great grace. We are so thankful to you, Lord, Father. Father, I pray for those who have not called Jesus Lord yet and have not come to be taught by you.

I pray that you press on their hearts the urgency of this matter and cause them to come. In your blessed Son's name, I pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.