

Jesus Invites Us to a Life of Rest

by Annie Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering to God and seeking to be transformed into His image. It highlights the need to overcome sin, have faith in God's promises, and strive for a life of victory and rest in Christ. The message encourages humility, contentment, and faith in God's leading for a victorious Christian life.

Scripture: Isaiah 29:5, Revelation 3:12, Romans 12:2, James 4:7, Hebrews 4:9, 1 Peter 2:11, Ephesians 4:30, Matthew 11:28, Revelation 3:5

Topics: "Surrender to God", "Transformation in Christ"

Description

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Transcript

As we have come to the, coming to the end of the year, and as that old English hymn says, time like a ever rolling stream, bears all its sons away and all its children away. One year rolls over to the next year. And very often some verses come to my mind.

And I want to share with you those two of those beautiful verses. If you can turn with me to Deuteronomy chapter 11. I'm sure all of us would have heard that sometime or other in our life.

Deuteronomy chapter 11, 11 verses 11 and 12. I just read it out. The land you are going over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water by the rain from heaven, a land the Lord your God cares for.

The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. Now we are coming, come to the end of the year and going over to the beginning of another year. We thank God for the, this verse as a promise we can keep and take on the Lord.

The Lord our God cares for us. When we think of the land, I thought we can put our name instead. And the year that we are going ahead of, the Lord is going to be with us and he cares for us.

And there it says it's a land full of hills and valleys. I thought of the hills which are ahead of us, which we may have to face. We definitely have faced many mountaintop experiences in the past and in the coming years, God willing, the coming year also, the Lord may lead us to some mountaintop experiences.

Experiences when we can hear from his word, like the Sermon on the Mount, when Jesus sat on the mountaintop and there were people around him and he taught wonderful things, practical things from his word. And may the Lord in this coming year teach us also wonderful things from his word and remind us of things which we already know. I think of the Mount of Transfiguration, where Jesus was transfigured and the disciples saw him briefly, his glory.

And we are going to see that more in a wonderful way when we meet the Lord face to face, when the disciples had a glimpse of that glory on that Mount of Transfiguration. And then may the Lord give us also glimpses of his glory, give us those mountaintop experiences when we are alone with him and we can see him transfigured and not as he really is, the Lord of creation, the Lord Jesus who died for us, the Lord who underwent all sorrows for us so that he can bring us also to the place, be close to him. And then also the mountain of many, many times Jesus went to the mountains to pray.

And may we also like that, have that experience this coming year of a life of time to pray and a life of prayer, when we can learn more how to talk to him and how to cast our cares upon him, not to depend on human beings, but to depend on him and talk to the father. The disciples told Jesus, Lord, teach us to pray. And that's what we also want to ask the Lord, Lord, in this coming year, teach us to pray, pray for our needs, pray for our families, our children who are growing up, our loved ones, some of them don't know the Lord and people around us who have various needs and we don't know how we can talk to them, but we can pray for them at least.

So those experiences of prayer, may the Lord give us mountaintop experiences of prayer. And last but not most precious of all, when the mountain of Calvary, where Jesus died on the cross for us, Lord, help me to appreciate the fact that you came to earth and your goal was finally to die for our sins, not just to show us the path where we should walk, but to die for our sins so that all our sins can be forgiven and blotted out and we can be justified. And we don't want to take that for granted, the immense suffering and sacrifice and the depth of suffering which Jesus went through.

And may this coming year help us also to come to that point when we understand more and more of his suffering. Recently, I was thinking of the picture in my mind of the Lord Jesus Christ wearing a crown of thorns and standing before Pilate and being later led to be crucified. And as he was standing before Pilate, I thought of this, when Jesus was wearing the cross on his head and the blood streaming down on his face and his neck and all, in his hands, he's putting out a thorn for us.

He said, look, he says to us, look, my child, I'm wearing this cross, this thorny crown, but I'm going to give you one day a crown of glory, a crown of life, a crown where I'm going to honor you before the others. And he puts out that crown for us. Oh, what a wonderful savior we have.

That he took that crown of thorns and pain for us so that we can have a crown of glory. And this year, I want to appreciate more of that sacrifice and that love that Jesus has for us, where we think of whatever we go through is nothing, will not be a burden for us. When we think of that supreme love, when he wore that crown of thorns and he hands over to us, when he's going to place on us undeserving people as we are, that crown of glory on our heads.

And I want us all, I want to be faithful to the end and make this coming year, use every opportunity this year to show my love and my gratitude to the Lord who did so much for us. So that's a little bit of the crown of the mountain of Calvary. Then there are valleys.

This is the land of hills and valleys. There'll be valleys we have to go through in this coming year. In Psalm 23, verse 4 says, even though I walk through the valley of shadow of death, I will fear no evil because you are with me.

Your rod and staff are with me. Your rod to discipline me and your staff on which I can be supported, I can hold on to. You are like that to me, Lord.

You can discipline me and I want to cling on to you and hold on to that rod. But even though, even when you lead me through the valley of shadow of death, we don't know what the future holds for us. Life and death are in God's hands.

But if and when we go through that valley, maybe some loved one is going to pass away or we ourselves may be called to be with the Lord, but you are with me. And in Psalm 84, verse 6, there's another beautiful verse. Even when I go through the valley of Baka, valley of weeping, it says, you are with me.

There'll be springs of water when I go through that valley. I praise and thank God instead of tears falling from our eyes, when we go through valleys of weeping, there'll be springs of fresh water for us. There'll be refreshing where we can wash our face, wash away all those tears, and there'll be freshness and comfort.

The Lord will comfort us when we go through valleys of Baka. We all have different areas we go through where there's been weeping and there will be. When some loved one has gone or some sickness, loss of some jobs or some trial because of our children and the temptations and struggles they face and which we cannot tell other people.

But all those things, maybe valleys of Baka for us, but there'll be springs of water to wash our face and to be comforted. Praise God. And there also it says in this verse in Deuteronomy 11, there'll be a land where there'll be water from the rain of heaven.

There'll be constantly freshness, rain from heaven will come and refresh us always when we go into that land and be rid of the water of life. In Revelation 22 verse 1, it says there'll be from the throne of God in the New Jerusalem, from the throne of God, there'll be a river where there'll be waters of life flowing through from the throne of God and there'll be freshness in that water. Praise God, we can begin to have that freshness in our life even on earth because the Lord says, I'm going to bring you to that land where there'll be freshness.

There'll be water from heaven to keep you always fresh. In John chapter 4, Jesus told the Samaritan woman, the water I give you is living water. You'll never thirst again.

You don't have to go to the world for freshness or comfort or to people. I'll give you that living water to comfort you. And there it says again, the Lord cares for a land where the Lord cares for.

The Lord delights, the Lord delights in us. Can you imagine what a comfort it is? The Lord Almighty delights in us and He cares for us. And the eyes of the Lord are always upon us, upon it from the beginning of the year to the end.

Praise God, Lord's eyes are upon us from the beginning to the end, end to beginning. And the Lord wants to bless us. What a loving God we have.

He wants to bless us. All that He wants from us is to surrender ourselves to you and say, Lord, I give myself over to you. Your love is so great.

I don't deserve it, but I want to give myself over to you again in the end of this year and the beginning of the new year. God created us with a great purpose. God created man, Jesus created Adam and man in His image.

God wanted human beings to be in His image, to be like Jesus. But because of sin, that image was marred. And more and more, as people have drifted away from God, we see how much that image has been marred.

And He wants us to restore that image which we lost, which became because of sin. And if we cooperate, we can get some of that image. He's not going to force us.

He's not going to drag us and say, look, take up a cross, die to yourself. You have to do this. He lovingly says, if you want to, here's my, I offer this to you.

This is my plan. If you want to accept it, you will get my image. You will partake of my nature.

You will become like me more and more. It's not like an instant thing. Like today, when I wake up tomorrow, I'm going to look like Jesus.

It's not like that. But little by little, He changes however much we surrender to Him and we cooperate. That's the choice is ours.

The decision is ours. He has given us everything. It's up to us to accept it.

If you want just a teaspoon of it and say, Lord, that's enough for me. It's too bitter, too strong. It's OK.

That's enough for you. When you say, Lord, I want that cup. I want more.

I want rivers of living water to flow through me. He said, here it is. I'm here to give you that freshness and that glory, that glorious life, Christ's life I want to give you.

So may the Lord help us to enter that land of rest. In Hebrews 4, He says, enter that land of rest. In Hebrews 4, Levin says, strive to enter that land of rest.

So it's like a paradox. It's a land of rest where you can rest, but you have to strive to enter in it. It's hard, but it's easy.

It's a life of rest where you can relax, but at the same time, you have to work hard to live it. But it's not that we have to work hard. The Lord will give us the strength to enter into that land of rest.

But that's God's plan. When we, you know, everything in the Old Testament, in 1 Corinthians 11, it says that everything in the Old Testament is an example, given as an example for us. So all that the children of Israel went through was an example to us about our Christian life.

Like for instance, the bondage they were in in Egypt. It's a picture of us before we come to the Lord, a life of bondage to sin where we are bound and we can't be set free. And then the Lord sends a deliverance.

He says, take you out of this bondage. But there's one thing you have to do. You have to put the blood on the door.

You have to kill a lamb and put the blood on the door post. And all those who are inside that will be saved. That's a picture of the blood of Jesus shed for us.

And when we come to him and surrender our life to him, his blood shed for us will deliver us from our sinful life. And crossing the Red Sea is a picture of baptism, water baptism. That's the next step.

And going through the cloud is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We've heard all that in our meetings before. And then going through the wilderness is our earthly life after that.

But living in the wilderness is not God's plan for us. God's plan is which he promised to Abraham and lead you to a land which I have promised and promised you this land. And through you, I make you into a nation, a great nation to Abraham.

And through that nation, I'll use that nation to send my son, the Messiah. And through this Messiah, my Lord Jesus Christ, there'll be salvation to the whole world. That was God's plan for the children of Israel, not just to bless them as a nation and make them prosperous and make them multiply and be a great nation.

He wanted to send a redeemer through them. He wanted to give the gift of salvation to them, to all people in the world, including us, we who are outside the territory of Israel. Even we can get that benefit of salvation.

That was God's plan. And he said, I'll bring you to that land. And that land is a picture of a different kind of life.

For the children of Israel, it was a land of Israel. But for us, it's a picture of a land of rest, which the Lord wants to give us. Now, when they entered the land of, when they were given a chance to look at the land, they sent the spies and said, go survey the land and tell us what it is.

And they came back and 10 of them said, it's very difficult. There are giants there and it's very difficult. And only two people had the faith we, God has promised.

And with God's help, we can get. And I mentioned one time about one of my sons who said about the giants, I want to show you this picture. Some of you have seen that, okay.

It's a hideous, it's a hideous picture. I'll take it away. I won't show it to you for so long.

It's a hideous picture. And it looks so gruesome and scary. And some of the children said it looks like a demon or looks like a dragon or whatever.

But that was a zoomed up picture of this, an ant. That was the zoomed up picture of an ant. And the children of Israel saw this ant like a giant, as I showed you, or much more hideous and so scary.

But the Lord said, look at it, even in your eyes, in my eyes, it's insignificant. You can just do this and it'll go away. You can just brush it off.

It's just a mere ant. Why are you scared of it? I'm with you. You don't have to be afraid of these giants.

They may look scary to you. But don't you believe in me, that I can take care of you? I promised this land to you. I said, I'll give you this land.

And you're looking at the land and you're looking at the giants and you're so scared. They're just like grasshoppers. You can stamp them, you can crush them, you can eat them as bread.

But they didn't have faith. Then the majority prevailed. Even now, the majority prevails.

Most people say it's impossible to live a life of victory. You all talk great things. It's all in your mind.

Victory is not possible. But two people had faith and said, we can overcome. But because the majority prevailed and they all wanted to stone Moses and kill him.

The Lord said, God told them enough. I'm not going to put up with you. And you know what happened to them.

They had to wander in the desert, in the wilderness for another 40 years. But those 40 years were not wasted. God still had some plan, even though many years of our lives are wasted because of unbelief.

Hardness of heart, as the Lord told about the children of Israel, hardness of heart, unbelief, disobedience, idolatry, murmuring and gambling. All those things the children of Israel were doing. But even in spite of that, those 40 years, God used those 40 years to teach them many things.

He taught them about them. He gave them different laws. He taught them about the tabernacle and how to make the tabernacle.

And about the priests and so many things and all those things. What does it mean to us? We read Deuteronomy and Leviticus and we think it's all for the children of Israel. But everything there is a symbol for us.

The sacrifices, you know, I don't want to go too much into detail. But if you have a Bible study and you take the book, which my husband has written through the Bible, and you look at, go through Leviticus and Deuteronomy, you'll see that everything has a meaning. The sacrifice is about the Lord Jesus Christ who has made a sacrifice for us.

The Day of Atonement, one of the goats led as a scapegoat into the wilderness, picture of Jesus, the priest, Jesus our priest. And even the robes of the priest, God gave them a design. It said you have to have a design.

You have to embroider pomegranates and bells. Even that has a significance. Pomegranates, we read that is a symbol of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

And the bells picture the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Everything has a meaning. And the Lord gave the children of Israel the shadow, the symbol of all these things.

What a wonderful God. He was preparing the way for Jesus to come to this earth. But he gave a little bit, a veiled picture of it to the children of Israel.

He made the tabernacle like this. And these are the rules you must do for this matter. And this matter, if something happens in the home or if there's some sickness, if there's leprosy, you should do this.

Everything is a picture of sin of the future. Leprosy is a picture of sin. How a person has been put away and then wait for God to cleanse.

Many things. I don't want to go through the details. But I want to create a hunger in our hearts to study God's word and see, Lord, whatever you promised and you spoke about in the Old Testament is fulfilled in the New Testament in the life of Jesus.

I want to understand that in my, not just in my mind, but in my heart and apply it in my heart and obey it. So God used those 40 years to teach the children all those things. And then they were asked to, they said that old generation died.

And then a new generation came up and then Moses had to tell them again. That's why it's all repeated in Deuteronomy. Again, Moses told them, obey the commandments.

If you obey, this will happen. If you don't obey, these are the consequences. These are the curses which will happen because there's a new generation.

And Moses repeated that to them. And now I just want to talk a little bit. That's the main thing I want to talk about is this land, which the Lord wants us to enter and the spiritual application to us for us in our daily life.

The land which the Lord promises us is the life of victory over sin. And we can live a victorious life on earth. We can have Christ-likeness in our life.

All these giants which I showed you, all those things are a picture. The giants which were in the land of Canaan are a picture of the things which are in our flesh, which we have to struggle against. Now there are two or three types of enemies we face.

One is the biggest enemy, Satan. He has been defeated by Christ, by Jesus, when he died on the cross. When Jesus shed his blood and defeated Satan on the cross, we don't have to worry about him because Jesus defeated him on the cross.

And we just have to live in that victory. He's like a paralyzed giant where all his ammunition has all been taken away. And he's just so helpless.

But he looks so frightening and scary, but he has no power because Jesus has defeated him. And we can claim the victory and live in that victory. But he can get power over him if we go into his territory.

We've given to our lust, given to our anger and continue to live in sin, hating people and not forgiving people and having bitterness towards people. Then we are going into his territory and we get into his grip. But Jesus defeated Satan.

And other enemies are people around us. They are not enemies. Jesus said they are not the enemies.

We have to love our enemies and do good to them. But the real enemies we have to face, battle with, are the things in our own selves. The battlefield is not outside.

For the children of Israel, it was in a new country. But for us, the battlefield is within us. Our anger, our temper, unforgiving spirit, jealousy, wanting more and more of these earthly things, covetousness, comparing ourselves with others, name it, all the things, not able to put up with our children and impatience.

All those things are the enemies in our flesh. And they've ruled us for so many years. I find that the enemies which have ruled for many, many years are the hardest to overcome.

But this can still be overcome. And it will take time. But with the Lord's help, we can overcome.

It's not impossible. And we have to cooperate and say, Lord, I want to surrender my will to you. And I want to obey you and do what it takes to conquer these things.

And the captain in the children of Israel's case, the captain was Joshua. We have a captain too. And that is our Lord.

And he is our Lord Jesus Christ. A wonderful captain who has gone ahead of us, gone through the same path that he asked us to follow. He says, follow me.

It says in Hebrews 12, 1, let us run the race looking at Jesus, the author and finisher of our salvation. And he teaches, he helps us to overcome. And he teaches us this is the way to overcome.

And the ammunition that he gives us is not the earthly ammunition. In 2 Corinthians chapter 10, verse 4, he says, our weapons are not fleshly. And in Hebrews 6, I mean, Ephesians 6, we know the favorite things we have taught our children, the armor of God.

Hebrews 6, 13 to 18. It says, we know, where Paul says, put on the whole armor of God, the shield of faith, the sword of the spirit, the helmet of salvation, prayer, the breastplate of righteousness, and the shoes, footwear, where we are eager to spread the gospel of peace. Put on, without that armor, we cannot overcome.

Daily, we need that armor. Can't say that, Lord, one day, long ago, 20 years ago, I gave my heart to you. So everything is okay.

Then if we rely on our past, then we have lost our armor and will be defeated. But every day, we need to come in with prayer, diligent prayer, prayer without ceasing and say, Lord, I need you. I need that armor every day.

I need to have that sword of the spirit, the word of God in my hand, in my heart. I want to keep, hide your word in my heart. Otherwise, I'll be defeated.

And our captain shows us how we can overcome all this. We use all this ammunition, use all these weapons, but how can we overcome? It says in Matthew 11, 28 and 21, Jesus puts out his hand to us, his nail pierced hands, and he says, come to me, come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, none of me, and I will give you rest. Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, I'll give you rest.

I'll take my yoke upon you and learn of me. For I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you'll find rest for your soul. For my yoke is easy, my burden is light.

This Christian life, this battle is not a fierce battle. It's a battle, the opposite of how the world thinks how we should fight. In the world, we think we should speak up.

We should fight for our rights. Unless we speak, unless we defend ourselves, unless we give them peace of our mind, we won't be able to overcome. Unless we show them what type of people we really are.

But the Lord says, that's not my way. The key is humility. Here's my key for this victory.

If you want, you take that key. Keep that key always in your hand. Learn of me.

If you open that door, you'll find the answer. Learn of me. It's easy in my work.

You have burdens which are so heavy, but this path which I'm going to lead you is an easy path. You'll find rest. I was speaking about the land of rest.

You'll find rest for your souls because my yoke is easy and my burden is light. We are all of us have heavy burdens we are bearing. And the Lord says, just give me that burden.

I carry that. I've carried heavier burdens. The whole world I created, I can take care of your burden.

But just take my yoke. Be my disciple. Say you're my disciple and follow me.

And my yoke is easy. You'll find it. You may think it's hard.

It's hard to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. And it's hard. I have to obey this.

I can't do this. I can't party. I can't enjoy life.

That's the wrong thing which people tell us and the devil tells us. But my yoke is easy. You follow this path.

It's such a happy, joyful path. My yoke is easy and you'll find more and more rest in your life. It won't be hard at all.

We just hand over your life to me and I'll take care of it. And the result is instead of anger, we have peace. Instead of that disturbance and bitterness, there's joy in our heart.

He fills us with that joy. We can't describe it to other people. People who hear about the Lord and coming to the Lord, they think it's, oh, I have to give up this.

I can't do this. I can't do that. The Lord says it's not like that.

It's an easy life. But it won't be like overnight you'll become like me. As much as we surrender ourselves, that much we become like Jesus.

If we don't want to surrender everything, it's our loss. But we surrender everything to the Lord and say, Lord, here my whole life and my whole heart. I place myself on the altar and I want to take up the cross and follow you and want to deny myself.

The more we experience the joy which Jesus gives in our heart and more Christlike we become. It's not that we will make ourselves Christ. Christ, we become like Christ.

Jesus will transform us. And he gives us that reward of which he's waiting to give us. What is that reward for? Overcome us.

He says, I'll give you a crown of life. If you look at Revelation 3 verses 6 and 12 and 21, there are some things which the Lord says, I'll give to overcome us. I'll make you a pillar in the house of God.

I'll make, I'll give you a crown. There are so many things which the Lord gives to overcome us. And there's also a sad thing which can happen.

Those who didn't want to overcome and kept on giving their lives over to Satan and becoming more and more defeated. There's a possibility of our name being rubbed out, blotted out from the book of life. Our name which was once written there could be rubbed out.

It's hard to believe that. But in Revelation 3, that's a warning for us. And the Lord, it's not just a battle.

The Lord, there are other things which the Lord says, which the Lord wants us to go through. Not just taking up the cross, the Lord allows circumstances in our lives. And I read a beautiful poem.

I love poetry, but I won't read that whole poem. But I condensed it so we can easily, because it's in the old English where it says canst and thou and all that is written by somebody called Ag Jenkins. And I just read it out.

It's a short poem. Dear child of mine, upon earth's rugged pathway, longing for my fullness more each day to share. In the days that I must deal with thee, can thy heart endure? It says canst thy heart endure, but can thy heart endure? Endure what? Can your heart endure melting, molding to a rare vessel? Can you endure that? God, the Lord will melt us and mold us, but he'll make us into a rare, beautiful vessel.

Can your heart endure it when flowers are uprooted, which you thought were fair and seemingly, and the seeming beauty of that stripped? And those flowers you thought were beautiful are uprooted. When I break those idols in the temple of your heart, which should have been my father's house, which should have been my father's house of prayer, can your heart bear? When I lead you through lonely paths, why, to speak sweet words of comfort, can you bear? Can your hands be strong and your feet strong to tread with me this untried pathway? All my promises, never failing, are yours for sure. If you give your body, soul, and spirit surrendered, you will endure through faith.

In my almighty keeping power. The Lord has great things for us. We think our life, which we have is beautiful, and we don't want to surrender that.

But the flowers which we think are beautiful, we'll uproot that and plant more beautiful flowers, divine, beautiful. And the idols which we had in our heart and we don't want to surrender, we allow him to smash it and he'll take his rightful place in our heart on the throne. So praise God that he has wonderful things for us and it's up to us to surrender.

I always want to remind myself of that, which I just said earlier. He wore a crown of thorns so that we can wear a crown of glory on our heads. And he wore the painful crown and for us it's a joyful crown.

This life which we go through is so short, not enough to do all that we can do to show our gratitude to the Lord who suffered so much for us. Some people take it wrongly. Even in those days when Jesus came to this earth, Jesus came to reveal his wonderful plan of salvation to his people, the children of Israel.

But through all these years which had gone by, people took it wrongly. There were Pharisees who took these symbols and measured on these symbols. They said the most important thing is these outward things, the type of clothes you wear, the long clothes and the washings and the rituals and all the things which the Pharisees did, they understood the whole thing which God was showing the children of Israel and revealed to Moses.

They just took the symbols and measured on that. We too can take the outward things and measure on that and think, oh, these are the most important things. We should observe this.

We should do this. We shouldn't do this. A Christian should be like this, be like that.

That's wrong for us to measure on those things. The Lord says, come back. That's not the real thing which I want to teach.

It's an inward thing which I want to show. It's an inward cleansing. The sacrifices are not these outward things.

Sacrifices are a broken and contrite spirit. That's what we need. That's what I want you to have.

I want you to have humility, not look down on others and think your righteousness is more than the others and you're better than these other people and you keep the law and the Sabbath and all that. That's not the inward. I'm looking at the heart.

Out of the heart is coming all these dirty things of the flesh and anger and all these things. Put away those things. Jesus was trying to show them, but the Pharisees, their eyes were so blinded they thought, ah, outward things.

I'm okay. The public can look at him. He's bowing his head and ashamed to look up.

I can put up my head because I've done this. I've done that. And Jesus said, wrong.

That's the wrong way of taking it. And Jesus tried to show, even for us now in these days, Jesus shows us, don't become a Pharisee. Don't measure on these rules and regulations and laws and even Bible study.

Don't measure on that. When you read the Bible, don't look at it like an academic book. Look at the spirit of it.

I want to speak to you in your heart. I want to teach you to obey. And there are other people who took it wrongly, the Sadducees in Jesus' days.

They took on, they couldn't believe it. They said, oh, there's no resurrection. There's no such thing.

Even now we see people who read part of the Bible and say, oh, I don't think there was such a thing that happened, like Jonah being swallowed by a fish and being alive. And how is this happening? How did that happen? This is not true. That is not.

And they put unbelief in our heart and our children go to the schools and they hear that and they think, yeah, yeah, that's a doctrine. That's the truth. That's the doctrine of the Sadducees.

And Jesus said, beware, don't let your children be polluted by the doctrine of the Sadducees, which unbelief and doubting and these modern ideas and these modern things that you can be like this and you can disobey God and have these new theories and still be a child of God. You have to accommodate all these things also into God's kingdom. They are God's children.

And our children think, oh, this is what my mom and dad did. Is it correct? Or what I hear with my friends and in the social media and all, should I take that? They're all confused. And we as moms, we can tell, come back, come back to the spirit of God's word.

Jesus warned, don't be like the Sadducees who doubted and didn't want this and doubted this part and scratched out this verse from the Bible. We have to warn our children and say, my son, my daughter, look at mom and dad. See how we believe God's word.

Every word of God is inspired. Every word of God is precious. If you take out one word, God will blot out names from God's word.

It's precious, it's given, inspired by God. Then we have to warn our children. We have to be ourselves, be strong so we can protect our children.

Another thing that our children faces and we ourselves faces is the doctrine of Herodians in Jesus' time. The Herodians were the people who liked to party and, you know, Herod had his brother's daughter come and dance and all this spirit of the world and enjoying the world and exuberant lifestyle and plenty in this and wasteful and all that. Jesus said, be careful, don't teach your children that.

That's a dangerous thing we have. By God's grace, we are earning more money than our parents did. We have more access to more money, but doesn't mean that they have to do all these things.

If it's a luxury, you don't need it. If it's essential, OK, we'll get it for you. You don't need a grand type of cell phone, mobile phone with all these apps and everything.

A simple cell phone is enough for you at this level. When you grow up and you earn money, you get a more modern and you can teach me and maybe you can buy me a more modern mobile phone. But for you, this is enough.

How much wisdom we need to teach our children. They're sitting next to them in school, our friends with all kinds of gadgets and they think and they like to show off. Look, I have this.

My dad bought this for me. It was and then we said, that's OK. That's OK for him to have.

But for you, this is enough. This small type of gadget is enough. One day you can afford a better and you're driving your old your mom's and dad's old car.

That's OK. Let your dad and let your friends come in a more modern car and racing car or electric car or whatever car it is. That's up to them.

But for you, this old car is enough. It has served good purpose all these years. So we teach our children, be content.

And we are doing that. All of us, I know we are trying to do that to our children because this world is such a dangerous place. And we want to teach our children because we are not going to be always with our children.

One day we leave them. The Lord will take us home and our children have to face more difficulties and more kind more temptations will come, compromising situations and worldly things and dangerous things will come. And how will they face it? If these things we have to help them and we tell them, my child, be content with this.

I know dad and mom, we can afford this for you. We really need it. We do it.

But be content. Don't have vanity. Don't do things.

Don't possess things to show off because our life doesn't depend on, Jesus said, the abundance of things that we have. Our life doesn't consist of that. Our life is more important.

Our life is more precious to Jesus. We have eternity, all of eternity. God will give us better things in eternity.

But be content. And then another group of people in Jesus' time, those are the Zealots. Some people who joined Jesus, Simon the Zealot, he was a very radical man.

He thought that the Messiah will come to start an earthly kingdom, to establish an earthly kingdom. Yes, he is going to come to establish a kingdom of heaven on earth, but not when Jesus came at that time. So those Zealots we can compare to the political Christians.

I mean, people have political agenda and they think, oh, politics, this party and that party. And people ask, which party do you belong to? And I'll say, I belong to the party of Jesus Christ. When Jesus is, that's where I belong.

And we don't enter into all these things and we get confused. And in Jesus' days also, there were people who were involved in politics and they couldn't understand why Jesus came. They thought Jesus is coming to establish and this is the Messiah.

But they didn't read. There's another part of the Messiah which they missed out. Isaiah 53.

He was wounded for our transgression. He suffered and nobody and his back was beaten so much like Pharaoh's. And he beaten so badly that we couldn't even look at his face.

We feel so ashamed when we see his face beaten for us. That Messiah they couldn't see. We saw a Messiah who's coming as a ruler.

Yes, he's going to come like that. But the Messiah who came at that time and whom we look at now is the Messiah who suffered for us. We want to follow in his footsteps, take up his cross daily and follow him.

No price is so hard for us. For the Lord who gave us, give up everything for our sake. The little bit what we give is like a small grain of rice or something we give up.

And the Lord says, there are treasures waiting for you, which I kept. You know, in earth itself, you can have all your needs will be met. You don't have to be struggling and seek first my kingdom and righteousness.

I'll take care of everything. You won't lack anything. I'll take care.

You may not have what you desire and luxury and all, but I'll take care of your needs and I'll see that you're provided for and I'll see that you're healed. If it's your will, like I did for what happened to Paul. If I give you a sickness, I'll give you grace to bear it.

But healing also is there. I know the many times the Lord has healed me and I thank God for the Lord healing me. But I also know there are things, weaknesses, which the Lord allowed.

And I say, Lord, your grace is sufficient for me. I can go through life if you're with me and you're holding my hand and you take care of me. And it's not that we are going to be changed instantly.

There's a beautiful song I want to share with you. It's a song. I think you look up in the YouTube, you might find.

We used to sing that in our CFC sometimes. He's changing me. He's changing me, my precious Jesus.

Little by little and day by day. Little by little in every way, my Jesus is changing me. I'm not the same person I used to be.

Although it's slow going, this I'm knowing that one day I shall be like him. I shall be. So I'll just quickly summarize.

Time is running out, but I'll just quickly summarize what I had written. I tried to convey to you. It's God's will that we should be like him.

We should have his image because from the time of creation, God created Adam, a man in his image. And that's God's will. Be convinced this is Lord.

This is your will for me that I should be like you. It's not like if you want a distinction or A grade or higher mark. No, it's for all of us.

That's his will. And secondly, we must long and desire it. We must be convinced that, yeah, God's will for me is to be like him.

And we must be convinced about it. If we are lukewarm and not and doubting about it, as it says in James, nothing will get nothing. But if we have faith and we are convinced about it, then and we must long for it.

Then it will happen. And I said about the importance of an overcoming life. That the reward that the importance is that will be a pillar.

That's like the reward we are going to get. Much more will be a pillar in the temple of God. If you read in Revelation 3, 6 and Revelation 3, 12 and 21.

You can find these things for overcomers to overcome. You'll be a pillar. You'll sit with me on my throne.

You'll have a crown of life and your name won't be blotted out from the book of life. Then also, I want to underline this. How the Lord wore a crown of thorns so that he we can have a crown of glory.

Then I want to emphasize that we must have faith that victory is possible for us. That faith can come in an instant. One time in one of our earlier talks, I said about how God gave me that faith in Isaiah 29, verse 56, verse 5 and 6, it says, in an instant, this will happen.

That faith came to me and in an instant, in an instant, the Lord says, your enemies will be crushed down. You will have victory. That faith came to me in an instant, but then the overcoming life doesn't come in an instant.

It's not a magic life. If we think we can be changed quickly to be like Jesus, we become so proud. You see, oh, I graduated.

Now I don't have to worry anymore. I'm like Christ. I don't get angry anymore.

I don't, I'm not jealous anymore. And I'm not that, that, that anymore. We become so proud.

But the Lord doesn't give victory like that. Little by little, as in that song says, little by little and day by day, I'll get that victory. And don't forget those giants are just minute ants in God's eyes.

We may look big and loom big in our eyes. Greed, anger have been ruled us for so many years. But with God's strength, we can overcome.

And God does two things. He allows us to take up the cross and wants us to take up the cross and follow him. But he also leads us through pruning and molding the poem which I write out there.

And our part, what we have to do is to keep away from evil. There's that beautiful verse in 1 Peter 2, 11, abstain from things that pollute us. And Ephesians 3, 4, 30, it says, don't grieve the Holy Spirit.

Those are things we have to do. Don't be conformed to the world. Romans 12, 2. If you practice sin, you're a slave of sin.

That's what John 8, 34 says. If you practice sin, you're a slave of sin. But we have to stop with Jesus.

Jesus said, if the son will set you free, I can set you free and really be free. And we have to take up the cross and learn from him. Run the race, looking unto Jesus.

And it's not a burdensome life. It's a life of rest. It's a life of joy.

But the paradox is we have to strive. We strive with God's strength. We strive to enter into that rest.

We abandon ourselves into his hands. And he will lead us on step by step into this true land of promise, which we read in Hebrews 4, says the children of Israel couldn't get that land. There remains a rest for the people of God, it says.

It's a mystery. The children of Israel, though they entered the land of Israel, they didn't enter the true rest which God has kept for us. That Sabbath rest, that seizing from sin, that victory over sin, that Christlike life, overcoming life.

That is the true rest which God has kept for his people. All the other things were just a shadow. That rest of the Old Testament was a shadow of the true rest which Jesus came to give us and which we can have.

We can lay hold of us. And I trust that all of us, you and I, will lay hold of that rest in this coming year. The land, the rest which God wants to give us.

It's our time is up. My heart is so full, but I have hope this coming year the Lord is going to lead each one of us. No matter what our past was, our defeat was in the past.

There's hope for us. The rest ahead of us, a beautiful land, the land, life which the Lord delights in and cares for and his eyes are upon us. Just let's take hold of those promises and say, Lord, please lead me to that land more and more.

I'm not going to be discouraged anymore. I'm going to have hope. It is going to be better and better for me day by day.

It doesn't matter if I slip and fall one day. Of course, a baby starts walking. He will fall many times, but he gets up and he walks again.

He's not looking around and saying, did somebody see me fall? Even if we don't want to go and help him, he'll learn to get up and by himself walk. He may be hurt a little bit. He may cry a little bit, but he will walk one day.

And one day the Lord will make our falling experiences less and less. Those valleys will be less and less. Mountaintop experiences will be more and more for us.

Hallelujah. And it doesn't, victory doesn't come by repeating. People say, oh, victory in Jesus name, in the blood of Jesus.

Hallelujah. Just keep repeating blood of Jesus, blood of Jesus. Those are all those shortcuts don't work.

The path, the key that the Lord gives us is that key of humility. The path that Jesus gives. That partaking of his nature.

Learn of me for I am meek and lowly. I'm humble and you will find rest to your souls. Shall we close in prayer? Our Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you that there's so much ahead of us.

We look back at our life and we can only see defeat and failure and loss. But Lord, we come to you out of all those failures. We come to you, Lord, and we know that you're going to set us free and you already set us free.

And there's a life of victory. There's a wonderful life ahead of us. Life of joy and peace.

No more discouragement and hope because you're with us. You're holding our hand, Lord, and you're going to lead us each day. And your wonderful promises are there.

Your Holy Spirit is living in us, Lord. What should we have to fear? What will we fear if you are living in us, Lord, and you're going ahead of us? Your rod and your staff, they comfort us. Thank you, Lord, for all your glorious promises.

Help us to inherit more and more of that and to come to that rest, that life of rest, that life of victory, the Christ-like life in the coming days, Lord. Thank you for all that you did for us in this last year. Thank you for your protection.

Thank you for your care. Thank you for promises for the future for us and for our families and our children. Lord, we just bow down at your feet with love and thanksgiving in our hearts, Lord.

You support so much. We want to think of that crown of thorns which you wore for us and kiss your hand in gratitude, Lord, that you have done so much for us. We trust you, Lord, to lead us wonderfully in the coming days.

In Jesus' precious name, Amen.

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