

Getting Ready for Jesus to Return

by Sandeep Poonen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in God's Word, being 'all in' for God, and valuing one's spiritual future above material wealth.

Duration: 38:00

Scripture: Isaiah 53:10, Matthew 16:24-27, Matthew 19:21, Mark 12:41-44, Romans 10:10, 1 Corinthians 13:3, Philippians 3:8

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Surrendering All"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being willing to be crushed and utterly destroyed for the sake of following Jesus. It highlights the value of surrendering all aspects of our lives, including our riches, past mistakes, and comfort, to find eternal life. The speaker urges listeners to prioritize their spiritual future over worldly possessions and to be all in with Jesus, even if it means becoming smaller than the eye of a needle. The message stresses the significance of being willing to lose everything to gain eternal life and to be judged by God based on our deeds and willingness to be crushed for His sake.

Transcript

I found something to be true as I speak with faith. I found that this truth of Romans chapter 10 verse 10 to be more of a reality which is you believe in your heart and there is righteousness but if you confess with your mouth you obtain salvation. I want to encourage everybody who's gotten up and spoken here today that because you're confessing with your mouth, faith in God's Word, forsaking idols, what God has shown you to be idols, all of the things that we've heard today to mourn over your sins, to God our affections and God will write His laws into our hearts.

This is true. God says it in His manual. This is the way to do it.

If He says to go dip in the Jordan seven times, you do it. You don't have to worry about the mechanics of it and what happened if you did six times and not seven times. You just do it.

We don't have to think too much but when we confess with our mouth and we keep confessing with our mouth in faith and God will help me to fear Him always, it starts to happen. I can't explain it but as I have had opportunities to speak and it's not about speaking here primarily or only. It's good to do that.

Get over your fears of speaking and get up and stand up for the Lord. People went to the stake and died for their faith. People were crucified upside down for their faith.

To say a few words in the presence of God's family, praising God is not that terrible a thing but it can reap a lot of good consequences. I have experienced that. I don't get up here to speak to explain a lot of things to other people.

I have no desire to do that. In fact, I don't have a lot to explain but I get up because I want to speak and tell my own heart and I'm more and more confident and sure that God is listening and I want to make Him proud and the devil is listening. I definitely want to get a shot in every chance I get.

I want to be more bold at my work. I want to be more bold with my family. I want to be more bold with you all that the prince of this world may have nothing in me and that if I can stand up here and despite my pathetic track record, I can speak with faith on how to be different, it's a wonderful thing.

If I can speak with faith that the Lord will and does fill me with the Holy Spirit when I come to Him, the sin will fail. It's in His Word. It's a fact.

It's more true than the ball that goes up will come down. It is more true than the ball that goes up will come down because it's in His Word. This is something the Lord is trying to cement in us.

If it's in His Word, it's more guaranteed than gravity. Dear brothers, sisters, dear children, even you can grab a hold of it. If it's in His Word, it's more guaranteed than gravity.

I want to speak from Matthew chapter 16. Matthew chapter 16 is a passage that we have spent a lot of time listening to. I remember we heard this passage five years ago, at least, and I've heard this many times before that too, when Peter confesses that Jesus is the Son, the Messiah, the Son of God, and Jesus says in verse 18 that on the rock of the revelation that Jesus is the Son of God, not that Jesus is a good teacher, not that Jesus is a great prophet, but that Jesus is the Son of God.

On that rock, when we have our eyes open to the reality that Jesus is altogether different, some of us may have been there, some of us might have lost that, some of us might approach scripture just as nice teachings, not words from the Son of God, the only one who came down to earth. When we see that revelation, it's on that rock that the church is built, and we have to keep reminding ourselves and keep seeking God to keep that view of Jesus fresh in our eyes. Then we'll take his word seriously, then we'll obey it easily, all kinds of things happen in that, then we're able to set our minds on the things of the spirit because we see who's saying it.

But that needs revelation, that God says, Peter, a lot of other people are saying that I'm Jeremiah and I'm John the Baptist and I'm Elijah. You, you see me in a completely different league. Such people will build a church.

People who see Jesus in a completely different light. Then Jesus in verse 21 went and started to talk about how he was going to be crucified. You see in verse 21, he began to show his disciples how much he, how he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed.

This is, remember we are sitting on the other side of the story, this is brand new news to them. And this is their revered leader. What if somebody you really respected got up and said, hey, you know, in a month, a year or two, I'm going to go get beat up and I'm going to get flogged and I'm going to get crucified.

What would be your response? Oh, please, not you. God be merciful to you. You of all people, you're the son of God.

Not, that shouldn't happen to me. Maybe I, maybe I deserve it. I'm the horrible sinner, but not you.

That's exactly what Peter did in verse 22. Peter took him on his side. Jesus, not you.

You know who I just told you you are. We're all together different. So whatever happened to you and Jesus said, get behind me, Satan.

You're a stumbling block for you. You're not, you're setting your mind on God's interests, but you're not setting your interests on God, but on man's interests. And then Jesus goes on to say this.

In this context of how Jesus was going to have to suffer and get killed and get flogged, is in that context, he says, Peter, you saw me as the son of God, but you still got your mind on man's interests. He calls the disciples and in another passage, he says, he calls the crowd in Mark or Luke. When he says the same things, though, he says, if anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, take up this kind of cross where I am going to suffer and get killed.

You're going to have to have that same attitude and follow me. That's what happens if you really seek God, Jesus to be the son of God, you're going to have to follow him. Because, you see, then it works in verse 25.

It says, because whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it. And whoever loses his life for my sake shall find it. And then it says, because what will a man be profited if he gains the whole world and forfeits the soul? What will a man give in exchange for his soul? Because, in verse 27, the son of man is going to come in the glory of his father and he's going to judge the world and he will recompense, he will pay back, he will repay every man according to his deeds.

That's verse 27. And you see, what struck me about this passage that I wanted to share with you is from verse 24 to verse 27. He's in the context of what Jesus said he was.

But verses 24 to 27 is a statement that has a reverse logic to it. He says, you must take up your cross and follow me, verse 24. But then he says, here's why.

To give you the reason for this, because saving your life is not going to help you. You're going to have to lose it to find it. And then he goes again, because.

Why, Lord, should I offer up my life? Because, what is a profit to you if you gain the whole world and you and your soul? Why? Why does that logic work? Because one day I'm going to come again and I'm going to repay every person according to your deeds. So let's work backwards from verse 27. Let's start with the starting point of what God's logic, Jesus' logic here was.

Was basically, I'm going to come again and I'm going to repay every person according to their deeds. This is a very simple statement. It's not very hard to understand.

The wise and the intelligent theologians will try to split hairs about it. But whether you're Calvinist or whether you're Aminist, whether you're pre-millennial or post-millennial, whether you're rich or poor, every person is going to be repaid by Jesus according to his deeds. Now this doesn't mean that I can just look at these deeds simplistically and say, here is a good deed, so plus one.

And here was a bad deed, minus one. I cleaned my room if I was a child, plus one. I didn't clean my room, minus one.

It's not as simple as that. We know that if we study scripture. I didn't do this, so I did do that.

It's not as simple as that. It's all the way down to my motives and the intentions of my heart. But I'm going to be repaid according to my deeds.

Which is the outworking of what was all the way down from the motives and intentions. All the way from that bottom, plus what came out. So my words of my mouth, through my actions, through how I spent my time, through what was my affections.

It's the sum total of both. So when Jesus says I'm going to repay you according to your deeds, it's not did you do this, it's not karmic, it's not based on karma, but it is based on what started in your heart. And out of that, what came out.

So it's not just did I give 10%, or did I give 15%, or did I give 50%. Did I do it out of love? 1 Corinthians 13, Paul says you can offer your body to be burnt at the stake, but if you don't have love, it is nothing. You can give all your possessions to the poor, but if you don't have love, it is nothing.

So what will happen though if I have love? I'll keep all the money to myself? No, I'll also give, but with a different mindset altogether. So when it says that he will repay me according to my deeds, it's very simple. Jesus is coming to repay us according to how we live our lives.

Not just actions, but from all the way from our heart. And I have the right attitude in my heart, and he'll repay us not based on quantity, but on quality. And we get an example of this on how Jesus did assess people in Mark chapter 12.

Here's a good example that should help show us a little mock example of how Jesus will evaluate us too, in any particular situation. Here's a little example that Jesus says, here's how I could show you evaluating you. Let me take one instance, Mark chapter 12 verse 41.

Here he sits down, Jesus, Mark chapter 12 verse 41. He sits down opposite the treasury, and he's watching the multitude putting money in. And many rich people were putting in large sums, and a poor widow came in and put in two small copper coins.

And he said, truly I say to you that the poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury. Rich men were putting in so much, but this woman who gave just two little copper coins put in more than everybody else combined. For they all put in out of their surplus, but she out of her poverty put in all she owned.

So here's a great example, a very simple example that you can take to many areas in your life. Lord, I don't have some great teaching gift. Lord, I don't have some great ability to do this or to do that.

All I have is two copper coins. And I see all these men of God who are publishing books, and standing up and speaking, and seeming to do this, and seeming to do that, and making such great things, writing songs, doing that, memorizing scripture. Lord, I got two copper coins.

Did you give it everything you had? That's all God's asking you. Some of us, God will say your biggest problem was you were just lazy. You sat around and you gave into your comfort all day long.

You just read whatever you wanted to read, you ate whatever you wanted to eat, you thought about whatever you wanted to think. That's not, why do I only have two mites? That's not the attitude of this woman. This woman, out of her poverty, had two mites and says, I'm all in to this treasury of this temple.

I'm all in, Lord Jesus. Everything I have, every word I speak, every thought I think, every feeling I feel, I'm all in. I'm willing to surrender.

And Jesus said, such a woman only had two mites, gave more than everybody else combined. So we know very simply, it's not about quantity. It's about all in.

It's about, are you all in? And so some person who's a five-year-old can be all in with their five-year-old heart. And that five-year-old may be giving more to the Lord sitting here right now than all of us, because all of us are not all in. We're giving out of our surplus.

We're giving out of, we're not doing anything anyways at 9.30 to 11.30 on Sundays. It's out of our surplus. And here's a small little boy or girl, eight years old, 10 years old, who's constantly watching her mouth, who's constantly seeking to obey her parents.

She's all in. God may look at her and say, you know what? I'm going to repay you more, you eight-year-old who never got up to speak, who didn't even know five Sunday school songs. I'm going to repay you more than everybody else at NCCF, because all of the rest of them just gave out of their surplus.

He will repay each person according to their deeds. And this is a very simple example of how God will repay. You know who loves this? People who are all in.

This is a wonderful message for people who don't have a lot to give, but are willing to give everything that they have. The people who have lots of free time, who just love to waste it on ourselves and our own thoughts and our own feelings. We don't like these kind of messages.

God is here to disturb the comfortable and comfort the disturbed. And so if you sit here thinking, Lord, I don't have much to give, I didn't grow up in a good Christian family, I don't have the brain that some of these other people have to share truths. Be comforted.

Just give all that you have. You don't have to ask the potter, why is it one coin or two coins or five coins or 10 coins? Give what you have. And God's only problem with you is you're not all in.

You're not giving all that you have. You give out of your surplus. You love something more than Him.

Understanding God's logic is extremely important. And He's given us this one little story. And you find that, like the story in Luke chapter 7, where is the woman who is the sinner.

You see the story in Mark chapter 12 verse 41. You find that in a culture which was dominated by men, Jesus went out of His way to find these little women who were not doing much to exalt them and to give them a level not of equality, but of superiority. You see that in both those stories in Luke chapter 7. He says, this woman, her sins have been forgiven, her faith has been saved, go in peace.

You Pharisee, I don't know what to say to you. Here again, all these people giving tons and tons of money, I don't know what to say to you. This little woman who gave two coins elevated her to superior.

God doesn't judge by the color of our skin or by the gender He looks at. Are you all in or not? So don't despise yourself because you're a man or a woman or the color of skin or certain intellectual capabilities. The only question is, are you all in with Jesus? When He tells you, I'm going to suffer.

And I'm going to be beaten up and I'm going to be killed. Are you still all in? Or do you want a more merciful God? If we give all that we have, we'll find that the logic of God starts to dominate us. Next verse, verse 26, is because He's coming again, now moving backwards, going back to Matthew chapter 16, going backwards from there, in verse 26, here's an incredible logic that all of us who are the people of God must grab a hold of.

He says here, what does it profit? He's asking you to do a balance sheet. He's asking you to use your, all of us have a brain for money. What is worth more than the deals? We're all good with the deals.

And He says, what is a profit to you? If you gain the whole world, but lose one soul. So let's do the math. Which is greater? One soul or everything in this world, not just Bill Gates money.

Bill Gates, plus Warren Buffett, plus all the treasury of America, plus all the treasury of every country in the world. You put that all in one big stockpile. And you put one soul on the other.

Am I doing the math right? What is Jesus saying? What is a profit to you? If you've got all of that, but forfeited one soul, first of all, your own. Jesus fully embraced this math. That is why He came down from heaven.

Because one soul was more important. That is why when the devil gave him the offer of all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, Jesus could say, get behind me. I'm here not to purchase one soul.

I'm here to purchase souls of all the whole world. If they will accept me. But for him in his math, the logic of heaven, one soul was worth more than all the kingdoms of this world.

We've got to take this to our bank accounts. We've got to take this to all the things we're worried about. Anything in this earth is probably what you're worried about.

You're probably not worried about the solar system and the meteors hitting us. You're probably worried about something on this earth. It's your money.

It's your future. It's your marital status. It's your children.

It's your grandchildren. It's something. And God is saying, put that all in one pile and just think about one, the eternity of a soul.

We must have this towards our own soul. We must weigh the value of our spiritual life worth more than all of this world. And this verse has struck me like a thunderbolt.

I don't know if you remember me, those who were here a few weeks ago, I spoke about, I don't know. I was talking about joy and I said, I don't know if I'd have more joy with the fact that Jesus forgave me of all my sins and wrote me in the book of life or if Bill Gates gave me a billion dollars. I was afraid that if Bill Gates gave me a billion dollars, I'd actually be more happy.

This verse has helped me. I praise God that I spoke out of my need a few weeks ago and God gave me an answer to this. Grab a hold of this logic.

Here's the verse for you. Here's a word of faith that I can give you to hold on to. What is it profit you, Salih? If you get the whole world, forget Bill Gates one billion dollars, I mean, let's increase the stake share.

If you've got the whole world, your soul is so much more valuable than that. Invest in your soul. Invest in your spiritual future.

That's the most valuable thing on this earth. Jesus is saying that because he's saying, I'm going to come and I'm going to repay you according to how you live and your deeds. And I'm going to tell you now, I'm showing you the exam paper.

What's most valuable? Don't study economics. Please don't get me wrong. All of us must go to college.

All of us must get educated in this world to make a living. But what my point is, so much more valuable is your spiritual future. Are you investing your life in having faith in God's word? There's only one reason why we are not receiving the greater powers of the Holy Spirit.

It's because we don't believe him. It's not because God's withholding anything from us. And God is saying, I'm going to come one day and I'm going to repay you according to your deeds.

And there's your soul is so much more valuable than all of the things on this earth. Get a hold of that logic and value what's happening to your soul. You're letting it languish.

It's not getting food properly. You read my word and it's barely getting a flicker. You're happy to put it down.

Don't now suddenly muster up the courage to change something, but mulling over it. Say, Lord, this is not how it should be. It should be different because your soul is more valuable than all the kingdoms of this world.

Because one day I'm going to come and I'm going to repay you according to how you lived. And your soul is more valuable than all of the things of this world. Where you live, what you do for a living, how long you live, who cares? One soul is more valuable.

Now I take that to, now what happens when my neighbor encroaches my yard? What happens when my coworker takes the credit for my work? I have to do this value system to it. And this is how I'm applying it in my life. I say, Lord, what's more valuable? This coworker's soul or my work? My neighbor's two square inch of yard and his apple tree came into my heart and is bending my fence or his soul? One soul is more valuable than all the things of this earth.

It's helping me change my perspective. What does it profit a man suddenly? What does it profit you if you've got that extra two yards of space? And that apple tree was cut down correctly. What happens then after you fought for your rights? And now you got the credit for it.

Have you jeopardized your ability to reach that man's soul? Because you were right and he was wrong. What does it profit a man? I'm not trying to give you a how-to to always never fight, never stand up for what God, what is justice for. Please don't take this the wrong way.

I'm trying to establish a principle in your value system. Is one soul more valuable than all the things of this earth? And it's in that context he says, because whoever wishes to save his life will lose it and whoever wishes to lose his life for my sake will find it. See that word lose, I saw another translation that gave me a

better picture of it, which says, if I utterly destroy, if I utterly destroy my life for the life of Christ, then I will find it.

Because the word lose just kind of made me say, okay, I was kind of, there you go God, willing to do the trade. But when I saw utterly destroy, I saw God giving me a mallet and a piece of rock and he says, smash it, utterly destroy it. And that's what crucifixion was, it was a picture in that day that we don't have so much today, where it was a nail and pretty painful endeavor.

And he says, you got to pick up your cross, not just surrender, pick up your cross. So my world-influenced view of life driven by comfort and security has to be crushed. So he says here that if whoever is bent on saving his life on his comfort and his security will lose it, but whoever is willing to crush it and utterly destroy their lives will find it.

I thought of another story here that gives you an example of somebody who was not willing to utterly crush their life. You can read about it, but most of you may know it in Matthew chapter 19 about a very impressive man who had achieved a lot at a young age, had accumulated a lot of money, was also a very powerful man, we know him as the rich young ruler. Not only that, he had also obeyed a lot of the commandments from a young age.

And you know what he wanted? Eternal life. The same thing here, which is saying here, you want eternal life, you'll find it. But you'll find eternal life, Jesus is saying here, if you lose it.

If you're willing to utterly crush it. And here was a rich young ruler who had so many good things going for him. And he'd been keeping the commandments from a young age.

And he came to Jesus and said, what should I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said, what about the commandments? He's like, I've been keeping it from the time I was a young boy. Jesus said, one thing you need to do to utterly crush it. It's the area where you still think you're rich.

That money that has a significance over you, give it all up. Utterly crush it. Utterly destroy it.

And you'll find eternal life. Come follow me, you'll find it. That was just one thing that held him back.

And that was all it took for him to miss out on eternal life. What a tragedy. He had been following the commandments from a young age.

Surely he deserves to squeeze in. Utterly destroy that area where you're rich. And you know what Jesus used as a picture? He used a picture of a needle.

I wish I had a needle I could show it to you. I don't know if you didn't see it. And then he said, you don't have to squeeze in through the width of a needle.

He said you have to squeeze in through the eye of that needle. A little hole of a needle. If you want to enter the kingdom of heaven.

But you're too rich. You got something that's, you call it baggage. God calls it riches.

It's maybe your past. Maybe it's what something did for you. But because of that you're like a camel trying to squeeze in through the eye of a needle.

And God says get rid of that baggage. You're fine. You're valuable.

If you'll drop everything of all of your past and all of your past mistakes. And all the things that you feel you've done terribly. You'll drop everything.

You'll fly through the eye of a needle. Some of us have to do that. Some of us have to get rid of all the areas that we think we're rich in.

And we have to be. Dear brother, dear sister, you have to take a mallet and you've got to take a hammer and crush that guilt over your past. You can do this, you can let that past hang over you for the next 50 years.

And God could have told you, you could have just smashed it right now. Just accept God's word. And take a mallet to anything that is meaningful to you.

And God is making you big. Bigger than the eye of a needle. That's why little children can get in.

They're not very big in their own eyes. They're okay not knowing a lot. We need to be crushed.

So small that you have to fit in through the eye of a needle. Do you want to be that small? Oh Lord, let's be merciful to me. I'm actually a very tender, fragile person.

I can't take too much. Please Lord, not let a hammer go through me. Get behind me, Satan.

I need to be crushed. You want to follow me? Come follow me if you don't deny yourself. Take up the cross and be crushed.

Because if you're crushed, you'll find eternal life. Because what is a prophet? If you take all your baggage with you, all your riches, and you lose your soul. Because one day I'm going to come.

I'm going to judge every person according to their deeds. I'm going to find out, was this person willing to be crushed or not? Was this person willing to be crushed of everything of them? It pleased the father to crush the son. Did you know that? It says that in Isaiah chapter 53, verse 10.

It pleased the father to crush him. It pleased the Lord to crush Jesus. It pleases the Lord to crush us too.

There's no other way. Rich, don't even bother applying. Rich and young with your whole life in front of you.

So what? Rich and young and a ruler and powerful? Still unimpressed. Rich and young and powerful and keeping the commandments from a young age? We're still on the outside. Are you willing to be crushed to become so small that you'll have to fit through the eye of a needle? Like Jesus was crushed.

And Jesus is opening up a view into your future. And He's telling you, you say that I'm the son of God, I'll tell you what's going to happen in your future. You younger brother of mine, I'm going to tell you what's going to happen to you.

You're going to suffer many things. From the religious people, from the world, and you're going to be beaten and you're going to be killed. That's in your future.

Are you willing to be crushed? Do we still want to apply? Whether it's our riches in our intelligence, in the color of our skin, in our race, in whether we are so relevant because we're always in touch with the current

culture, whether it is because of our business acumen, because of the money that we've accumulated, because of the children we have, or the behavior of our children, or how well educated they are. Everyone who is rich in any way is excluded. You're too big.

Are you willing to be crushed utterly? Blessed are the poor. It's the opposite of the rich. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Theirs is eternal life. Theirs, come right in.

And the Lord will show us on the final day, Sandeep, were you willing to be crushed? I could have so many things going for me and just one thing the Lord said, that's all held you back. Other people who came simply as they were, but surrendered everything. Paul is contrasted to the rich young ruler.

He too might have been rich. He was definitely young. He was definitely one of those rulers.

He was a powerful young man, having the authority, having the inside ear to the Pharisees. He was also a young ruler at a minimum. And he had kept all the commandments from a young age.

But then he met Jesus on the road to Damascus and he was willing to be crushed. And he says, I count all things as loss for the sake of gaining Christ. What a difference it made.

He had wasted at least 20, 30 years of his life. But in the next 37 years or so, it seems he died before 70. The next 30 to 40 years, what a difference it made that he could say, I finished the course.

I fought the good fight. I'm done. I wasted the first 30 years.

I was a blasphemer. He says that about himself. But I finished the course now.

Because I was all in. Because I was willing to be crushed. I who came with all my riches and my pedigree of being a Pharisee of Pharisees, keeping the commandments from a young age, all that stuff.

But I was willing to be crushed. Let me summarize. Jesus is coming one day to repay all of us for our deeds based on our hearts.

What will it profit then if we gain the whole world but we lost our soul? Our soul is the most valuable thing. Your spiritual future is the most valuable thing in this world. For all the kingdoms in this world and all their riches are one side.

And your precious little soul, you who think nothing of yourself, you who think you were abused, you who think you have been such a failure, you who feel so guilty for all the bad things, you are more valuable than all the kingdoms of this world. Your soul is. Be willing to be crushed and you will find eternal life.

Be willing to become smaller than the eye of a needle's width. Obedience will come easily. Become a nothing.

I hope to God that God will find this true in my life. I speak this also with faith. I am gripped with this life.

I am gripped with wanting to be crushed. I have lived too long other ways. It has not worked out well for me.

Trying to fit a camel through a needle's eye, you just figure out the pain involved in that. That is a testimony of many years of my life. Trying to squeeze a camel through a needle's eye, is that your testimony too? Let's all quit then.

Let's quit trying to fit camels through needle's eyes. Let's be willing to be crushed and we will gain eternal life. May God help us.

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