

The Most Important Thing Is To Remember The Most Important Thing

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of making devotion to Jesus the most important thing in our lives, above all teachings and standards. It highlights the need to seek after the new covenant standard diligently, aiming to taste and partake of God's divine nature, particularly focusing on developing a heart full of love like Jesus. The speaker encourages a deep desire to have God's love naturally flow through us, surpassing mere obedience and focusing on genuine transformation to reflect Christ's love.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 11:3, 2 Peter 1:3, 2 Peter 1:5, John 14:15, John 7:38, 1 John 4:7, John 3:16

Topics: "Devotion to Jesus", "Transformation through Love"

Description

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Transcript

It's so important to make the most important thing, the most important thing. What is the most important thing? We are hearing so much truth and the Sermon on the Mount is being unpacked week after week. And so, amidst all the teachings that we're getting week after week and light is being shone on different parts of life, whether it was poor in spirit a few weeks ago, to thirsting and hungering after righteousness, to pure in heart, to the righteousness exceeding the scribes and the Pharisees, and anger and lust and marriage.

It's so easy to get, you know, the most important thing for this week is anger and marriage and lust. Well, what about poor in spirit? Did you forget about that? What about pure in heart? What about, you know, being peacemakers, being gentle and mourning? It's so easy because we're hearing things at such a fast clip week after week that it's almost like you can sometimes feel like you're whacking one serpent of the next. The next week you'll get another bunch of serpents.

You know it's going to happen. You're going to see a couple more serpents available. And you can feel good about whacking the serpents that are being shown to you.

Nothing wrong with that. But for me, I've had to keep asking myself, what is the most important thing? And the most important thing is very simple. It's all, it's throughout the Bible.

You could probably have guessed it if you've been at NCCL long enough. The most important thing is to be devoted to Jesus. And devotion to Jesus, loyalty to Jesus is the most important thing.

Because I think you all know that you can get to a point where you don't get angry anymore, but you don't have a devotion for Jesus. And you can get to a point where you don't lust with your eyes, but you don't have devotion to Jesus. I know there were times when some of these sins were so difficult to ever imagine me having, you know, consistent victory over.

I never thought it would ever be possible. There was a time in my life where I thought I'm going to be defeated forever. But some of these sins don't bother me quite the same way as they should.

There are maybe much, much what we would call or what you may call as most people call much smaller areas that trouble me. And the question still remains is, how are you doing in the most important thing? How are you doing in the most important question? Do I have a stronger friendship with Jesus today than when the teaching started on the Sermon on the Mount? The series that my dad is talking is called Growth in Christlikeness. And that's Sermon on the Mount.

Well, growth in Christlikeness is not to where we look just like Jesus. You can have a mango that looks just like a real mango, but it's a fake mango. What we really want is a mango that tastes like a mango, not looks like a mango.

And that's the thing about fruit is you can't make something taste like a mango. You can't even make a mango from Bangalore taste like a mango from Kerala or a mango from Mexico taste like a mango from some other part of the world. It's all mangoes.

They're even not true mangoes, but the taste can be so different based on the soil, based on how the soil responds to the seed and the water. And you get a mango. One of them is really sweet.

It's always sweet. Every year the mango tree provides such sweet mangoes. And so we have to keep tasting the mango of Jesus, the quality of mangoes, how sweet Jesus is and be gripped with his sweetness.

That is the key that we have to be gripped with, with how sweet his life tasted, most of all to God, most of all to God. And the reason why Jesus's life tasted so sweet to God in his 33 years was because his heart was full of love. And I want to explain that just one little point.

It wasn't that his heart was free of anger. It wasn't that his heart was free of lust. It is true.

His heart was free of lust and his heart was free of love of money and anger and bitterness, but that's not what made Jesus so special. That's not the tree of life. What made Jesus so special was he had no anger, had no lust, and he had full of love.

This is what we have to covet. So when we learn all of the new covenant standard of how high it is, it's like learning so much about the techniques of making a tree look good and look like it's healthy, but never taking the time to taste the fruit that is coming out of the tree. That is the most important thing.

And we won't know whether how we are doing in the most important thing if we're not tasting of the fruit of Jesus and his love. It's as we taste the mango or the apple or whatever it is of Jesus's love towards us, it is as we taste his love, that's when we start to realize, wow, there's a big difference between his love and my love. And that motivates me to stop sinning.

That motivates me to stop looking at women and that motivates me to stop getting angry, but I'm not stopping just because I got angry. I'm not saying, oh, see, great job. I didn't get angry.

I didn't lust and all those things. What I'm interested is in the fruit tasting like him. That is the only thing that satisfies me.

So what if I were to tell you, hey, I'm going to give you the secret to never sinning again. What am I to tell you? I'm going to make it possible for you to not sin tomorrow. Will you be happy or will you say, no, that is not enough.

It's not that I just don't. It's not that I want to stop sinning. You have to give me more than that.

You have to give me rivers of living water, rivers of loving water that comes out of us. If not, I'm not interested in a clean cup. I have no interest in a clean cup if it's empty.

What good is it? And we have to get so caught up with the water rather than cleaning the cup. You're saying, of course, we've got to clean the inside of the cup. Well, why are you cleaning the inside of the cup? So that water can go through it.

That's the whole reason why we wanted the cup to be clean. Otherwise we can focus on cleaning the inside of the cup and stopping there, not realizing the cup was cleaned in the first place so that water can go through it. This is a very important thing for us to constantly remember.

Otherwise, dear brothers and sisters, here's what will happen. We'll do one of two things. One, we'll get very discouraged and condemned because we will not live up to this very, very high standard.

The standard that we hear at NCCF, the very standard we hear from CSE is even if we were to live up to the standard, we still wouldn't have reached the standard of Christ because we still don't know how holy Christ was more than everything we've been taught. I'm sure there's going to be more layers that we still have to find out of the holiness of Christ. So the true standard of Christ is probably what we don't even fathom.

It's going to get higher and higher and higher and higher. We can get very discouraged if we keep looking at just cleaning the inside of the cup. We'll get thirsty.

We'll get hungry. We'll be like, I don't have any food to eat. I'm not getting nourished.

It's the love of God that must nourish me. I must get so addicted to the love of God. I must get so enamored with the love of God.

And I must constantly be asking myself, Lord, not is my cup clean, but am I having my heart full of love? Not a single thought of unlove, unloving attitudes. That's what the mark of growing to be Christian is. So as I'm seeking that as my measurement, how much unlove is coming to me? Oh, clean love, clean heart for just full of love.

Lord, just love, love. I just want love out of my heart. Then when an angry thought comes, I respond to it differently.

I get the anger out, but not because I want to be free from anger, but because I want love to keep coming out. And I become so determined and desirous for the love of God to come out. I want to show you one verse in 2 Peter 1, verse 5. You can please turn with me.

2 Peter 1. 2 Peter 1 is a very important chapter because it tells you that we get to partake of the divine nature. That means we get to taste of God's nature, how he thinks about sin. It's a tremendous promise that God says, you want to taste what Jesus actually tastes like? You want to taste how incredibly sweet the life of Jesus is? 2 Peter 1, verse 3 and 4 are verses we have read before, but these are verses that you should remember.

These are verses that you should definitely know. 2 Peter 1, verse 3 and 4, that his promises give me the ability to taste. That's what that word partake of, is taste and to be so united with, like a way a husband and a wife are so united with each other.

In the same way, God says, that's what that word is, communion, union. In the same way, God and us can be, and his nature and me can taste of that nature. That's what 2 Peter 1, verse 4 says.

Now, what I want to underline is, you've heard this before, we've heard this from CFC many times and NCCA. What I want to underline is verse 5, a word in there, for this very reason, because God is giving you such open, lavish, unrestricted access to God's very nature. You know, even husband and wife, we don't get to be exposed to our very nature.

I think, you know, we were hearing about how one of the children are like, hey, look, we can tell you're biting the lip or that's the side of anger. But that's still not even into the nature. They're kind of predicting based on certain habits.

But imagine, even husband and wife don't get to really know people's nature quite the same. God's telling you, you'll get even further close to me. You don't even get a taste of my very nature.

It's such unfathomable closeness that God is saying, I can't tell you how much, I can't give you any more closeness than that. You know, the closest we can think of is husband and wife, but God says, I'll get you even closer than that. Now for this very reason, because God's telling you, I'll get you this close to me.

I want you to be so connected with me for this very reason, apply all diligence. That's the word I wanted to say. And then he says in verse 5, apply all diligence in your faith, in your moral excellence, in your knowledge, in your self-control, and in your perseverance, and in your godliness, and in your brotherly kindness, and your love.

Here's this uneducated fisherman kind of just rattling off all these virtues, you know, moral excellence, and knowledge, and self-control, and perseverance, godliness. I'm like, man, this is so overwhelming, all these things I need to do in verse 5, 6, and 7. But all of these things that we need to do, that's all the things in the new covenant, we need to do it because it says for this reason in the beginning of verse 5. And for this reason, we have to be super diligent to seek after the new covenant standard that is going to get higher and higher and higher. We don't have to be worried about it.

It's going to get higher and higher. But what's the motivation to fight for the new covenant? Because of what's written in second Peter chapter 1 verse 1 through 4. Because he gets to say, look, you have to partake of my very nature. Even a husband and a wife who love each other so perfectly, you don't get to taste each other's nature.

You get to see habits and preferences, and you know how their character is for the most part, but not the nature. God says, you don't get to know who I am. You know, you'll hate, you know, some people hate some things, right? Imagine my wife.

I'm not a big fan of lizards. Imagine if my wife can be so close to me that she hates lizards as much as I do. Can you imagine that? I mean, let's take a very trivial example.

Some people don't like the cream in the Indian tea. And some people like the cream in the Indian tea. You know, some people love to take the cream and eat the tea, drink the tea.

Other people don't like the cream. Please take the cream away. I'm one of those guys who don't like the cream.

I'm like, take the spoon and put it off. My mom loves the cream, puts it into her mouth. She loves it.

I'm like, Mom, what are you doing? And imagine if I could get my mom's nature or my mom could get my nature. It's unfathomable. That's an example of in your own lives, as you can see, even though I love my mom, I love everything about my mom, but I can't imagine me suddenly taking the cream and putting it in my mouth.

I put it in the sink. So anybody who's wondering which one is better, choose my mom's approach. So those who like the cream, you're like my mom anyways.

But I mean, you see my point. This is how close God is telling you, you can get, look, you can hate sin just like I hate sin. You can taste, not that you can do it automatically, but you can taste that hatred for sin that I have.

That's in my nature. You know, so my mom's love for cream in the tea, that that's in the tea, she takes it and it's a natural instinct to just taste it. She loves it.

And I'm like, Lord, is that possible that I'll have that same nature towards sin? And he says, yes, you can have it. You can partake of it. You can taste of it for this reason, because I'm giving you this promise with all diligence.

Listen to the sermon on the monk and embrace the teachings of the sermon. And you know, that word diligence comes up in verse five. It comes up in verse 10.

Therefore brethren, be all the more diligent. And then in verse 13, he says, I want to stir it up by way of reminder, a reminder. And then in verse 15, again, it says, I will also be diligent.

That verse diligent comes over and over again. So as we're hearing these truths about the new covenant, the standard can get high and high and high. And we can get so overwhelmed by so many truths in this, you know, born in spirit and gentle and mourning after our sins and pure in heart.

And most of us have probably even forgotten all of those messages. You know, now we're listening to anger and lust and marriage. And we're like, Lord, I forgotten it so quickly.

Well, be diligent, keep being diligent. Don't, don't worry about what you're forgetting and all. Just be diligent every day to apply all these things.

Don't worry about the past days, be diligent. Don't get your foot off the pedal. Don't restrict any of those things.

But in all of that, don't forget second Peter one verses one through four. It's because of second Peter one verses one through four that all the other verses apply. Don't ever forget the most important thing is that we want to taste like Jesus.

We want to taste just like Jesus in our love towards others, that our love doesn't have any of self in it. That Sandeep's love towards his brothers and sisters will have nothing of Sandeep in it. It will be all of Jesus's love.

That is love. You can imagine how much I have to die to myself. That may mean I don't call somebody because God says, I don't want you to call that person.

Or God may say call that other person multiple times because I want his love to flow more infinitely. And Sandeep's love can also get in the way. Sandeep's definition of Christian love can also get in the way.

Lord, I want, I love the taste of your love. As we heard, even though Lazarus was dead or was dying, Jesus says, nope, I'm not going to go yet. I'm not going to go yet.

Can you imagine a love that when a person is sick, he says, no, I'm not going to go yet, even though I can heal him. And so, you know, we don't have to always understand God's love, but Lord, I want your love. I don't want to have human ideas of love, but I want to taste that sweetness of your love.

And I want to make that the most important thing. So dear brothers and sisters, as you're hearing these truths, you'll be convicted in greater and greater ways as this series goes on. But make the most important thing, the most important thing.

Devotion to Jesus, 2 Corinthians 11.3. If you want to remember that verse, 2 Peter 1.1-4. Get those promises, taste his divine nature. And think about some way, if you're married, think about some way your wife is just naturally different from you. And you laugh about it and you joke about it and use that to imagine the difference between your nature and God's nature.

Even though you love your wife, you're like, look, as much as I love you, I'm not ever going to love this about you. But then take that to the nature of God and say, God, but is your promise saying that you'll be able to taste my nature in such a way that it will naturally come out of it. It won't be obeying a command.

It won't be like, okay, because God, you said it, I'm going to do it. Okay. Because I'm married to you, I'm going to do it your way.

That's not what God's promise is. God's not going to just give me obedience. He's going to give me that ability to taste.

And the nature we need is not to walk on water. It's not to raise the dead. It is to hate sin and to love righteousness.

Love, love it so much. We love people so much that we become more and more like Jesus in what we're willing to do for them. God so loved the world that he gave his son.

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